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Vol. XI, Nos. 3 and 4

1960

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## Eleazar of Worms' *Ḥokhmah ha-'Egoz*

ONE of the principal sources of the Zoharic doctrine of the "shells" (*qelipoth*) is to be found in the writings of Eleazar of Worms (c. 1160-1238), which were most certainly known to Moses de Leon.<sup>1</sup> Like his teacher Judah he-Hasid, Eleazar endeavoured "to give a new interpretation to the *Merkavah*",<sup>2</sup> and to this end elaborated in a number of places the mystical significance of the nut as an image of the *Merkavah*: "He who knows the science of the nut (*ḥokhmah ha-'egoz*) will know the depth (*'omeq*) of the *Merkavah*".<sup>3</sup> The interpretation of the nut as a symbol of the Divine Chariot is suggested by the biblical phrase, "I went down into the garden of nuts" (*Cant.* vi: 11), which was held to refer to the contemplation of the realm of the *Merkavah*. In the terminology of the *Yordey Merkavah* the mystic had to "descend" to that visionary experience, and the expression, "I went down" (*yaradeti*) fitted the situation very well indeed.<sup>4</sup> The "garden of nuts" could easily be identified with the "garden" (*pardes*) *par excellence* by which the object of mystical contemplation is commonly designated in *Merkavah* mysticism. To what extent the *Yordey Merkavah* made actual use of the symbol of the nut is difficult to establish. The tannaitic homilies on *Cant.* vi: 11 as preserved in *Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah* contain no allusion to the *Merkavah*. It is not unlikely that the detailed symbolism of the nut as found in the writings of Eleazar of Worms is a novelty introduced by himself.<sup>5</sup> The motif of the "shells of the nut" plays an important part in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. SCHOLEM, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Revised Edition), pp. 226, 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. below text 4, end. Similarly text 3: "And anyone who does not know the mystical meaning of the nut (*sod ha-'egoz*) does not know the *ma'aseh merkavah* . . ."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Zohar* ii, 15b: "'I went down' is used in the manner in which it is said, 'So-and-so went down to the *Merkavah*.'" For the term *yoredey merkavah* see SCHOLEM, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>5</sup> On the nut in Jewish folklore cf. M. GASTER-B. HELLER, *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Sagenkunde*, *MGWJ*, 80, N.F. 44, 1936, p. 40 and M. GRUNWALD, *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde*, 1927, p. 29. *Idem*, *Zur vergleichenden Sagenkunde*, *MGWJ*, 76, N.F. 40, 1932, p. 31 mentions the Christian motif of the "cross in the nut", quoting G. GRABER, *Sagen aus Kärnten*, 1914, pp. 32, 82, where there is, however, no real evidence of this theme. It would, if traceable, represent an interesting Christian parallel to the nut as an image of the *Merkavah*. Patristic homilies on *Cant.* do not seem to connect the nut with the cross. But the matter needs further investigation.



that symbolism, and is taken over, albeit in a changed and much more complex form, in the *Zohar* and Moses de Leon's Hebrew writings.<sup>6</sup>

It is not the purpose of this paper to trace the influence of Eleazar of Worms' *hokhmah ha-'egoz* on the *Zohar*. The whole problem of the sources of the Zoharic concept of *qelipoth* will be dealt with elsewhere. Here we are concerned with the treatment of the theme in the various writings of Eleazar. We shall therefore present the relevant passages and discuss the place of the *hokhmah ha-'egoz* within the larger conspectus of Eleazar's mystical doctrine.

The mystical symbolism of the nut occurs in the following writings of his:

(1) In the *Sodey Razayya* as printed in *Sefer Razi'el*, Amsterdam, 1701, fol. 11a: "And beneath the Throne of Glory is a space (*halal*), like a nut which has a space beneath it<sup>7</sup> . . . This is referred to in the verse, "I have gone down into the garden of nuts". A gloss (*hagahah*): This is the depth (*'omeq*) of the *Merkavah*."

(2) In his *Commentary on Canticles and Ruth*, Lublin, 1608, on vi: 11: "Into the garden of nuts: this refers to Jerusalem or the Congregation of Israel<sup>8</sup> or Abraham . . . and furthermore the 'garden of nuts' refers to *ma'aseh merkavah*."

(3) In his *Hokhmah ha-Nefesh* the symbolism of the nut is treated at first in homiletical fashion but in the end given its mystical value. The passage amply illustrates the fascination which the image of the nut held for the author's mind. Our translation is based on the printed edition (Lemberg, 1876, fols. 11a-b, and

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g. *Zohar* ii, 15b; 140b; 233b; a clear echo of Eleazar's term '*omeq ha-Merkavah*' is found in *Zohar* i, 19b: when king Solomon went down into the depth of the nut—*le-'omqa de-'egoza*; Moses de Leon's *Sefer ha-Nefesh ha-hakhamah* (Basle, 1608), I, o, c refers to the *sod ha-'egoz* as the *sod ha-Merkavah* and to the shells of the nut as a symbol of the shells round the *Merkavah*; in his great commentary on *Ezekiel*, ch. 1 Moses de Leon likewise mentions the symbolism of the nut. Cf. *Sha'ar Yesod ha-Merkavah*, MS. Cambridge University Library Dd. 3.5, fol. 6r.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Cant. R.* VI, 11: "Just as a nut has four compartments (*meguroth*) and a space (*sirah*) in the centre, so Israel were encamped in the wilderness, four standards, four camps and the tent of assembly in the middle." Eleazar of Worms uses the term *halal* for space. His mystical interpretation obviously prefers its own terminology.

<sup>8</sup> Most homiletical interpretations in *Cant. R.* on vi: 11 refer to Israel: R. Joshua b. Levi compares Israel to a nut-tree; R. Azariah likens the ignorant among Israel who support the scholars to the protecting shells of the nut, etc. See also *B. Hag.* 15b.

MS British Museum Add. 27, 199 (Margoliouth 737, iv), fols. 516r-517r:

"I went down into the garden of nuts: A nut has four segments (*šela'oth*) and a ridge (*hod*) in its centre. Likewise, there are four camps of Israel and one of the mixed multitude (*'erev-rav*). And the entire subject-matter (*'inyan*) of the Torah is like the nut: The numerical value of א"ש according to the method of א"ש ב"ש is 600, and that of א"ש in the normal way is 13, totalling 613. Even as the nut has an external bitter shell surrounding it, so were the Scroll of the Torah and the sword handed down wrapped together.<sup>9</sup> Beneath the bitter shell are two other shells dry as wood. Likewise, two brothers, Moses and Aaron, guard Israel and act as its guides. Beneath those shells is a soft shell in the centre of the kernel divided in four directions, corresponding to the captains over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens who judge Israel at all times. Finally, there is a shell which clothes (*malbesheth*) the kernel, corresponding to the clouds of glory and the Levites and priests. The kernel is shaped like four double-columns (*deyomedin*)<sup>10</sup> corresponding to the four camps; and the four double-columns of the kernel are round about its stalk (*'uqas*), and the stalk is in the centre, corresponding to the sons of Kohath, the sons of Gershon, the sons of Merari in three directions, and those encamped in front of the sanctuary Moses and Aaron and his sons, the sanctuary being in the centre. Moreover, the uppermost bitter shell corresponds to the heaven which encompasses everything, and [also] corresponds to the salty ocean (*yam 'oqyanos*). And the colour of the water in the sea is like the colour of the shell of the nut which is green, and like 'the green line which encompasses the whole world',<sup>11</sup> and corresponds to the admonitions and punishments which are bitter like the shell of the nut. And even as the shell of the nut, because it is bitter, protects the kernel against worms, seeing that worms are found only in sweet things, so do the admonitions and punishments protect the commandments . . . . . And anyone who does not know the mystical meaning of the nut (*sod ha-'egoz*) does not know the *ma'aseh merkavah* and the *hayyoth* and the 'fire' that 'flashed up and down' and 'out of the fire went forth lightning'. The nut has four segments (*šela'oth*)

<sup>9</sup> *Sifrey*, *'Ekev*, § 40 end; *Lev. R.* 35, 6; *Deut. R.* 4, 2, and further parallels.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *B. 'Eruv* 18a, 19b.

<sup>11</sup> *B. Hag.* 12a.



like the four *hayyoth*, and the middle one is raised at its ridge (*be-huddo*), corresponding to the Throne. And the eatable fruit is white even as *His throne was flames of fire* (*Dan. vii: 9*). It should have read, 'fire from the throne' but it speaks about how the throne was created<sup>12</sup> . . ."

(4) The mystical meaning of the nut is more fully described in yet another text which is extant in the following recensions:

(a) In a passage entitled *Sha'ar Sod ha-Merkavah* which is contained in Eleazar of Worms' *Sha'arey ha-Sod we-ha-Yihud we-ha-'Emunah*, published by A. Jellinek in *Kokhevey Yishaq*, ed. M. E. Stern, Vol. 27, Vienna, 1862, p. 13.

(b) In a passage quoted in the name of Eleazar (of Worms) by R. Abraham b. R. 'Azri'el (13th cent.) in his *Sefer 'Arugath ha-Bosem*, published by E. E. Urbach, Vol. ii, Jerusalem, 1947, pp. 168-171.

(c) In a passage recorded in a marginal gloss in one of the Mss of the work mentioned under (b) and reproduced by Urbach, *loc. cit.*, pp. 168-170.

(d) In a passage headed *Hilkhoth ha-Kisse* in Eleazar's *Hilkhoth ha-Kavod*, published under the erroneous title *Sodey Razayya* by Kamelhar, Bilgoria, 1936, p. 21a.

Texts (a), (c) and (d) represent a recension different from the one found in (b). Unfortunately, text (a) breaks off in the middle (noted by Urbach, p. 169, n. 6), and text (d) omits the first part (noted by Urbach, p. 169, n. 8). All the texts are in a bad condition, but it is possible to establish correct readings in a number of cases by comparing the parallel recensions.<sup>13</sup> The following is a

<sup>12</sup> In Eleazar's view the throne of glory (and the angels) arose from the reflection of the Divine light of the *Shekhinah* in the cosmic waters. That light produced a radiance which became a fire and thus caused the throne (and the angels) to come into being. Cf. SCHOLEM, *op. cit.* p. 113 and 376, n. 115. To the passages quoted there should be added *Sodey Razayya*, MS Brit. Mus. Add. 27, 199 (MARGOLIOUTH 737), fols. 126v-127r on *Hilkhoth ha-Kisse*: "How was it (*sc.* the Throne) created from the beginning of the world? The Holy One, blessed be He, made his splendour (*zohoro*) appear upon the waters, and from the radiance (*nogah*) of his limitless light his splendour shone (*higgiah*) from amid the waters; and by the force of this splendour fire arose from the water, and from that fire He formed (*haqraq*) and devised (*hashav*) the throne of glory and the 'Ofannim . . ." Eleazar makes the point that there is only *one* throne (against the view of *Midrash Shemuel* which ascribes a throne to every one of the heavens), and quotes in support the verse from *Daniel* (vii: 9) cited in our text.

<sup>13</sup> The present writer was not in a position to consult the MS Paris, B.N. *heb.* 850, which contains the *Sodey Razayya* (fols. 46-145). But according to infor-

translation of the relevant part of the recension extant in (a), (c) and (d), which has to be considered the better one:<sup>14</sup>

"I went down into the garden of nuts: The *gematria* of אֵל גַּת אֲנֹחַ is identical with that of וּזְעֹמֶק הַמֵּרֻכָּה.<sup>15</sup> Of nuts: Know thou that the nut has a green and bitter shell, and beneath this green shell which is cast off<sup>16</sup> it has a wooden shell like two cups in which the fruit is placed. It (i.e. the fruit) has four compartments (*šela'oth*), of which two are within one shell and two within another,<sup>17</sup> and between the compartments there stands a soft shell.<sup>18</sup> And there is towards the broad end of the nut a kind of window in the fruit between two of its compartments, and below on the ridge of it there issues from its compartments a kind of *membrum virile*, and there<sup>19</sup> it (i.e. the fruit) sucks from the bitter shell, hence no worms are found in a nut. For the kernel sucks from the bitter shell. In case, however, one removes the bitter shell before the kernel has ripened and whilst it is still on the three, worms will be found to develop in the kernel.<sup>20</sup> There are nine leaves to every twig of the nut.

Now I have opened unto thee a door to understand in thy heart this [verse], I went down into the garden of nuts, and to see that His great fire<sup>21</sup> is, like the nut, thick at its top and thin towards the earth.<sup>22</sup> Like the green external shell on its outside, *there was*

mation kindly supplied to him by Prof. G. VAJDA, the section of this MS describing the *Hilkhoth ha-Kavod* (fols. 84-93v) offers no parallel to the texts concerning the *hokhmah ha-'egoz* listed above.

<sup>14</sup> A critical Hebrew text of this recension is published at the end of this paper. The sigla א, ב, ג used in the textual notes refer to texts a, b, and c respectively. Unfortunately, text d was not available to the present writer. It represents in any case only a minor section of the text.

<sup>15</sup> = 501.

<sup>16</sup> *Infra* in the text: "which drops off".

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *infra* in the text: "the soft shell attached to the fruit". Text b refers to it as "the soft shell in the cavity (*be-ḥeqo*) of the nut" (p. 170, line 1).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *infra*: "the shell which is placed in between the four heads of the nut."

<sup>19</sup> Text b: "And it (i.e. the external bitter shell) enters into the kernel through a hole above."

<sup>20</sup> Text b adds some medical advice how to cure children who are suffering from worms in their intestines (p. 169, lines 6-8).

<sup>21</sup> This term denotes in Eleazar's terminology the "great fire" of the *Shekhinah* as distinct from the lesser fire produced by the radiance of the *Shekhinah* in the cosmic waters. The throne and the angels arose from the lesser fire. See *Sha'arey ha-sod* etc., *Kokhevey Yiṣḥaq*, 27, p. 13, line 36; p. 14, line 1; SCHOLEM, *loc. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>22</sup> Text b adds "Likewise the cherubim of the upper fire" (p. 169, lines 10-11), and quotes in support B. *Ḥag.* 13a describing the proportional increase in the magnitude of the limbs of the *ḥayyoth* from bottom to top.



*brightness to the fire* (Ezek. i: 13) *from the brightness before Him* (2 Sam. xxii: 13; Ps. xviii: 13), *like the appearance of torches* (Ezek. i: 13): A white flame seen from afar will give one the appearance of a wax-like green, like the external shell.<sup>23</sup> This is the shell which drops off, corresponding to *And behold, a whirlwind came* (Ezek. i: 4). Beneath the green one are two shells which are separate, but stick together when the nut is dry: the *great cloud* (Ezek. i: 4), *fire and hail* (Ps. cxlviii: 8), *And He made darkness pavilions round about Him* (2 Sam. xxii: 12). [When the nut is] wooden<sup>24</sup> the pavilion<sup>25</sup> is but one, but when the nut is fresh, there are two pavilions—*gathering of waters, thick clouds of the sky* (2 Sam. xxii: 3)—corresponding to the two shells in which the fruit is placed. *And out of the midst thereof the likeness of four hayyoth* (Ezek. i: 5): the four compartments of the nut, two of which are in one shell and two in another. *Four faces* (Ezek. i: 6): the four heads of the kernel. *Four wings* (*ibid.*): the four segments (*hulyoth*) of the nut beneath them (i.e. the heads). *And their feet were straight feet* (Ezek. i: 7): likewise in the nut. *And their wings were unfolded* (Ezek. i: 11): each segment is bipartite like wings. One stalk: this is the square-shaped throne occupying the centre. The cut in the stalk corresponds to the throne of judgment and the throne of mercy. And *It* (i.e. the appearance of fire) *flashed up and down among the hayyoth* (Ezek. i: 13): this is the shell which is placed between the four heads of the nut. The four heads of the upper segments are the four *hayyoth*, and the four lower ones are the four *cherubim*.<sup>26</sup> And the nut is round: *The appearance of the wheels* (*'ofanim*) *and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl* (Ezek. i: 16).<sup>27</sup> The soft shell attached to the fruit: *wheel within wheel* (*ibid.*). The side of the kernel facing towards the outer shell is red, green and yellow like the *[rain]bow* (Ezek. i: 28). The nut has five segments [altogether], four which are female and one being the *membrum virile*. Correspondingly, there are four

<sup>23</sup> The green colour of the external shell is but the appearance of the "brightness" (*nogah*) or of "torches" (*lappidim*) as seen from the distance.

<sup>24</sup> I.e. dry, and the two inner shells stick together.

<sup>25</sup> Which corresponds to the image of the inner shell, and symbolises surrounding darkness.

<sup>26</sup> In the *Hekhaloth* literature the *cherubim* occupy a higher place than the *hayyoth*. Cf. H. ODEBERG, 3 *Enoch*, Cambridge, 1928, pp. 148-9. Eleazar's view seems to be different.

<sup>27</sup> Text b has a further reference to the roundness of the nut: "The circumference (*heqef*) of the *hayyot* is like a round nut (p. 168, lines 12-13).



*hayyoth* and one *hayyah* above them.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, it is said in *Genesis Rabbah*:<sup>29</sup> Four times the firmament (*raqia'*) is mentioned on the second day, and once the firmament is called heaven (*shamayim*) . . . . . As the appearance of splendour, as the colour of *hashmalah* (*Ezek.* viii: 2): this is the whiteness of the kernel as such. The *Kavod*<sup>30</sup> has nine colours: each twig of the nut-tree has nine leaves. It is therefore dangerous to plant a nut-tree.<sup>31</sup> The two outer shells:<sup>32</sup> The throne is placed in the centre<sup>33</sup> between *darkness of waters* (*Ps.* xviii: 12) and *gathering of waters* (2 *Sam.* xxii: 12). and a black shell divides the kernel from the head of the *membrum virile*: this is the strap of the *tefillin*<sup>34</sup> upon the head of the *Kavod*,<sup>35</sup> blessed and exalted be He for ever and in all eternity. And beneath the kernel is a space: beneath the throne of glory is a space<sup>36</sup> like an ark, and in it are the souls of the righteous. He who knoweth the science of the nut will know the depth of the *Merkavah*."

<sup>28</sup> The existence of one *hayyah* above the four *hayyoth* may be suggested by the use of the singular instead of the usual plural in *Ezek.* i: 22, x: 15, 20. This would represent an analogy to Eleazar's doctrine of the "special cherub" (*ha-keruv ha-meyuḥad*) which SCHOLEM traced to the use of the singular in *Ezek.* x: 4 (cf. *Major Trends*, p. 113). On the other hand, the angelology of the *Hekhaloth* literature already knows Hayli'el, prince of the four *hayyoth* and Keruvi'el, prince of the *cherubim* (see ODEBERG, *ibid.*).

<sup>29</sup> URBACH, *op. cit.*, p. 169, n. 7 quotes *Gen. R.* iv, 2 and *Pirqey R. Eliezer*, 4 for reference, but in neither place anything even remotely resembling our passage can be found. Eleazar makes the point that in its description of the second day of creation the Torah (*Gen.* i: 6-8) uses four times the word *raqia'* on its own and once in proximity to the word *shamayim*, thus suggesting a fifth *raqia'* above the four. He infers from this that a special significance attaches to the numbers four *plus* one: the quaternity is presided over by a fifth being. The theme is illustrated in a variety of ways by scriptural quotations in texts *c* and *d* but, having no bearing on the symbolism of the nut, it has been omitted here.

<sup>30</sup> I.e. the "visible glory" (*kavod nir'eh*) as distinct from the "inner gory" (*kavod penimi*) which has no shape, only voice. Cf. SCHOLEM, *op. cit.*, p. 112 ff.

<sup>31</sup> On the dangerous properties of the nut in Jewish folklore cf. GASTER-HELLER, *loc. cit.*, quoting *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Bologna, fol. 119 b, 1160 (not contained in the Parma recension, ed. WISTINETZKI) and *Yalqut Hadash*, fol. 89a, no. 52: the nine leaves are the abode of evil spirits. Eleazar of Worms possibly alludes to this belief. For the phallic significance of the nut see MANHARDT, *Wald- und Feldkulte* I, 184 (quoted by GASTER-HELLER).

<sup>32</sup> I.e. as distinct from the one clothing the kernel.

<sup>33</sup> I.e. of the nut, between the surrounding darkness of the cosmic waters. As we have noted above (n. 21), the throne actually arose from the fire produced in the cosmic waters.

<sup>34</sup> Which must, according to rabbinic tradition, be black.

<sup>35</sup> See note 30. The haggadic motif of God wearing *tefillin* (*B. Ber.* 6a), which plays an important part in Jewish mysticism, is here applied to the 'visible glory'.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the reference to the *halal* in text (1).

The text we have quoted is not conspicuous for either clarity or beauty of its style. It is obscure and abstruse in the extreme, and yields no spiritual insight. Yet it is interesting as an attempt to condense the vast and amorphous material of *Merkavah* mysticism into a succinct pictorial representation of manageable proportions. It gives the whole of the *Merkavah* as it were "in a nutshell". Considering the unrestrained hymnic descriptions of the realm of the *Merkavah* in the *Hekhaloth* literature,<sup>37</sup> it has at least the merit of a certain discipline and systematic order which the limited scope of the image of the nut imposes. Instead of an almost unending series of concentric circles round the throne of glory<sup>38</sup> we find here not more than four circles, corresponding to the four shells of the nut. In his *Sodey Razayya* Eleazar still faithfully copies the ecstatic portrayal of the celestial realms in the *Hekhaloth*: "Behind the fearful throne is the wind surrounding it; and light surrounds the wind; and brightness surrounds the light; and fire surrounds the brightness;" etc.<sup>39</sup> In our passage a slightly more rational principle is clearly at work. Its literary form is a twofold one: Eleazar offers a kind of running commentary on certain verses in *Ezekiel*, ch. 1, and does so in the light of the doctrine of the *Merkavah* which he took over from Judah he-Hasid. On the other hand, he takes his cue from the image of the nut (which, it appears, he did on his own)<sup>40</sup> and gives a symbolic interpretation of the nut by relating its anatomy to the text of *Ezekiel* and other Scriptural passages, again in the light of the new *Merkavah*

<sup>37</sup> Cf. ODEBERG, *loc. cit.*, pp. 114-5, especially the quotation from *Midrash Kohen*.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Cf. MS. British Museum, Add. 27, 199 (MARGOLIOUTH 737), f. 126r. The hymnic description of the concentric circles is also retained in the *Sha-arey ha-Sod we-ha-Yihud* itself (*Kokhevey Yishag*, 27, p. 15). Eleazar quotes there (in another passage p. 11) the *Baraita de-ma'aseh bereshith* = *Midrash Kohen* (see JELLINEK, note 6).

<sup>40</sup> In a passage in the *Sodey Razayya* (MS Brit. Mus., fol. 3v) which is omitted in the editions (cf. MARGOLIOUTH, III, p. 5) Eleazar describes his own part in the elaboration of the *sod ha-Merkavah* as follows:

ואח"כ אכתוב לך סוד המרכבה כאשר קבלתי מפי רבנו יהודא החסיד כאשר קבל מאביו רבינו שמואל החסיד וגם קבלתי אני מפי אבא מורי יהודה אני אלעזר הקטן וגם כאשר בינותי בספרים ובמדרשים ואכתוב לך דבר דבור על אפניו ועזרת שדי עמדי לכתוב כאשר עם לבבי ואלהי ישר' יורני ויגל עיני במאור תורתו (דא אלפך) ואאלפך חכמה לאהבה את יי' וללכת בדרכיו ולדבקה בו.

The expression *לכתוב כאשר עם לבבי* seems to claim a measure of originality.



doctrine. The two approaches, viz. the exegetical and the contemplative one, often intermingle, as can easily be seen from a perusal of the text. Sometimes, he starts by quoting the scriptural text—a method which he uses e.g. in other sections of the *Sha'arey ha-Sod we-ha-Yihud*<sup>41</sup>—and sometimes he proceeds from a contemplation of the nut. The result is in either case an exposition conforming, at least in broad outline, to his theosophical doctrine.<sup>42</sup>

The most important link between our text and Eleazar's teaching concerning the *Merkavah* is provided by the term "His great fire", which clearly indicates the radiance of the *Shekhinah* or "inner glory".<sup>43</sup> It is difficult to understand the reference to its being "thick at its top and thin towards the earth", because it has no shape according to Eleazar's explicit teaching. It may, however, be an allusion to its diminishing radiance. That radiance or *brightness before Him*, etc. is symbolized by the green external shell of the nut, the explanation being offered that a white flame assumes a wax-like green colour when seen from a far distance. The two shells beneath the green outer shell seem again to reflect features known from his doctrine of the *Merkavah*. They symbolize the cosmic waters in which the radiance of the "great fire" is reflected. Eleazar identifies them with *gathering of waters*, *darkness of waters*, *thick clouds of the sky*, and also with *fire and hail*, a reference perhaps to the lesser fire which the radiance of the *Shekhinah* produces in the waters, and out of which the throne and the angels are created. The fire *flashing up and down among the hayyoth*, which is symbolised by the intermediate shell dividing the fruit itself, is probably that lesser fire, since it is related to the *hayyoth*. Of the throne, too, it is said in our text that it is placed in the centre and surrounded by *darkness of waters* and *gathering of waters*, a likely reference to the cosmic waters out of which it arose. Moreover, our text mentions the *kavod* in the context of the throne, undoubtedly a reference to the "visible glory" or "cherub on the throne" as distinct from the "inner glory" which is associated with the "great fire". It looks as if this figure is symbolised by the protuberance of the kernel of the nut described as "a kind of *membrum virile*". But the matter remains obscure in view of the fact that one would expect the *kavod* to occupy the throne, and

<sup>41</sup> Cf. p. 12 where he expounds verses from *Canticles*.

<sup>42</sup> For a full description of his doctrine cf. SCHOLEM, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-116.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *supra*, n. 21.

the location of the throne is somewhat at variance with the description of the place of its occupant. Strangely enough, the throne is visualised in the image of the stalk of the nut. There are, to be sure, other obscurities such as the two references to colours, the meaning of the one *ḥayyah*, and the unexplained symbolical significance of the "window" in the kernel. Most probably, there are *lacunae* in the text which are partly responsible for the riddles it presents. But the fact remains that our passage reflects the authentic teachings of Eleazar concerning the *Merkavah* in a highly novel form.

One point stands in need of further clarification. As we have noted, the four shells of the nut are interpreted as symbols of (1) the "great fire" of the *Shekhinah*; (2) and (3) as the cosmic waters; and (4) *the fire flashing up and down*, i.e. the lesser fire out of which the throne and the angels are created. The soft shell attached to the fruit is explained as a *wheel within a wheel*, i.e. as representing the angelic class of *'ofanim*, whilst the four compartments of the fruit itself stand for the four *ḥayyoth*. A somewhat different line of interpretation is taken in text *b* (p. 170, lines 2-4) where the first three shells are said to symbolise the elements of the theophany in *Ezekiel* i: 4 and its parallel in 1 *Kings* xix: 11-12: The outer green shell stands for the *stormy wind* (*Ezek.*) or *wind* (1 *Kings*). The first inner shell corresponds to the *great cloud* (*Ezek.*) or *earthquake* (1 *Kings*). The second inner shell represents the *fire flashing up and down* (*Ezek.*) or the *fire* (1 *Kings*), whereas the shell attached to the kernel symbolises again a *wheel within a wheel*. There is no mention here of the "great fire", although the green external shell is additionally interpreted as the appearance of the surrounding brightness from a distance, as in the other recension. Conversely, there is a trace of that other interpretation also in our main text. Interpersed in the exposition of the theme and unconnected with it there occurs the sentence: "This (i.e. the external shell) is the shell which drops off, corresponding to *And behold, a stormy wind came.*" But this line is not here pursued further. It is possible that the two recensions were conflated or that the original text contained already both ways of interpretation. According to one the shells symbolise elements of Eleazar's doctrine of the *Merkavah*, whereas according to the other they represent the paraphernalia of the theophanies as set out in the biblical texts. As it happens, it was the second line of interpretation which was adopted by Moses de Leon. He



obviously had little use for the first, which was so closely linked with a theosophy no longer subscribed to. Interestingly enough, the symbolism of the nut was disregarded by all pre-Zoharic kabbalists.<sup>44</sup> Isaac b. Jacob Ha-Kohen's Commentary on Ezekiel's vision of the Merkavah (*Mirkevet Yehezq'el*)<sup>45</sup> elaborates on the *stormy wind*, the *great cloud*, etc. without using the imagery of the shells of the nut. This is all the more remarkable, in that the author was in many ways not uninfluenced by Eleazar of Worms.<sup>46</sup> It was left to Moses de Leon to re-introduce the *sod ha-'egoz* into Jewish mystical thought. But far from representing Divine potencies of a positive character, the *qelipoth* now assumed demonic aspects not foreseen by Eleazar of Worms.

Text (4)<sup>47</sup>

ש ע ר ה כ ב ו ד . א ל ג ת א ג ו ב ג י מ' ז ו ע ו מ ק ה מ ר כ ב ה . א ג ו ב ב ין ת ב ין כ י  
ה א ג ו י ש ל ו ק ל י פ ה מ ר ה י ר ו ק ה ו ל מ ט ה מ א ו ת ה ק ל י פ ה' ה י ר ו ק ה' ש מ ס י ר ין א ו ת ה  
י ש ל' ק ל י פ ת ע ין כ מ ין ב' כ ו ס ו ת ו ה א ו כ ל נ ת ין' ב ת ו כ ה' ו י ש ל' ד' צ ל ע ו ת ב'  
צ ל ע ו ת ב ת וך' ק ל י פ ה א ח ת ו ב' צ ל ע ו ת ב ת וך ק ל י פ ה א ח ת' ו ב ין ה צ ל ע ו ת' ע ו מ ד ת'<sup>1</sup>  
ק ל י פ ה ד ק ה . ו י ש ק ל י פ ה ש מ ל ב ש ת א ת ה א ו כ ל ו י ש כ ל פ י ר ו ח ב ה א ג ו ב א ו כ ל'<sup>2</sup>  
כ מ ו ח ל ון'<sup>3</sup> ב ין ש ת י צ ל ע ו ת יו'<sup>4</sup> ו ל מ ט ה ב מ ק ו מ ח ו ד י'<sup>5</sup> י ו צ א מ צ ל ע ו ת יו כ מ י'<sup>6</sup>  
ז כ ר ו ת ו מ ש מ' י ו נ ק מ ק ל י פ ה ה מ ר ה . ע ל כ נ א ין ת ו ל ע ת'<sup>7</sup> נ מ צ א ב א ג ו כ י ה ג ר ע ין  
י ו נ ק מ ק ל י פ ה [ה מ ר ה]'<sup>8</sup> ש א מ י ק ל ון [ה] ק ל י פ ה ה מ ר ה ק ו ד מ ב י ש ו ל ה ג ר ע ין

<sup>44</sup> It is all the more noteworthy that Abraham b. 'Azri'el (13th cent.) quoted it in full in his *Arugath ha-Bosem*, a commentary on the *Piyyutim*. In his account of Abraham's acquaintance with Eleazar's works URBACH (*Tarbiz*, x, 30 f.) fails to mention the *Sha'arey ha-Sod* from which the quotation of the *hokhmah ha-'egoz* is taken.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. the edition of this text (with a most informative commentary) by SCHOLEM, *Le-heqer qabbalath R. Yisḥaq ha-Kohen*, Jerusalem, 1934, pp. 1-30.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. SCHOLEM, *Le-heqer* etc., pp. 44-45.

<sup>47</sup> See *supra*, n. 14.

<sup>1</sup> מאותם קלים א' <sup>2</sup> חסר בא' <sup>3</sup> לה בא' וג' <sup>4</sup> נתן בא' <sup>5</sup> בתוכה ג'  
<sup>6</sup> לה א' <sup>7</sup> תוך ג' <sup>8</sup> חסר בג' <sup>9</sup> צלעים א' <sup>10</sup> עומד ג' <sup>11</sup> ויש קליפה  
אחת בוחר אגוז באוכל א' ויש כלפי אחד רחב האגוז כאוכל ג' ואח"כ קליפה  
שמלבשת את הגרעין, חכמת הנפש, י"א ע"א <sup>12</sup> חלול ג' <sup>13</sup> ד' צלעותיו ג'  
<sup>14</sup> ולמעלה במקום אחד א' ולמטה במקום חד ג' ואחד חידו באמצעיתו, חכמת  
הנפש, שם, ואחד חודו באמצעיתו, חכמת הנפש, כ"י בריט. מח. 737.4, דף 516  
ע"א <sup>15</sup> כמי א' <sup>16</sup> תועלת א' <sup>17</sup> על כן - המרה חסר בג' <sup>18</sup> ידיו א'

בעודו באילן היה גדל<sup>1</sup> בגרעין תולעת. וט<sup>2</sup> עלין בכל<sup>3</sup> ענף וענף לאגוז. ועתה פתחתי לך פתח<sup>4</sup> להבין בלבך זהו אל גת אגוז ירדתי לראות<sup>5</sup> כי אשו הגדולה כמו אגוז עבה למעלה<sup>6</sup> וכלפי הארץ<sup>7</sup> קצרה<sup>8</sup>. כי כמו<sup>9</sup> קליפה החיצונה<sup>10</sup> הירוקה ב<sup>11</sup> מבחוץ ונוגה לאש מנוגה גדרו והוא<sup>12</sup> כמראה הפיידים. הרואה מרחוק<sup>13</sup> להבה לבנה נראית כקליפה<sup>14</sup> החיצונה ירקרת כשעוה<sup>15</sup> היא קליפה<sup>16</sup> הגופלת כנגד והנה רוח סערה באה. תחת הירוקה ב' קליפות [הדבוקות הנפרדות]<sup>17</sup> כשמתייבש האגוז ענן גדול כאש וברד<sup>18</sup> וישת חשך סביבותיו [סכות]<sup>19</sup>. עץ סוכה אחת<sup>20</sup>, ב' כשהאגוז לח<sup>21</sup> חשכת מים עבי שחקים כעין<sup>22</sup> שתי<sup>23</sup> קליפות והאוכל נתן בתוכו<sup>24</sup>. ומתוכה דמות ארבע חיות ד' צלעות לאגוז ב' בקליפה<sup>25</sup> זאת וב' בקליפה<sup>26</sup> זאת. [ד' פנים]<sup>27</sup> ד' ראשים<sup>28</sup> לגרעין<sup>29</sup> וד' כנפים<sup>30</sup> ד' חוליות<sup>31</sup> למטה לאגוז<sup>32</sup>. ורגליהם רגל ישרה וכן לאגוז בשוה. [וכנפיהם פרדות] כל חוליה חלוקה ככנפים<sup>33</sup>. והעוקץ אחד הוא הכסא המרובע הממוצע בתווך. וחתוך<sup>34</sup> [העוקץ] (הקליפה)<sup>35</sup> כנגד כסא הדין וכסא רחמים<sup>36</sup>. .... [היא מתהלכת בין החיות]<sup>37</sup> הקליפה המתווכת<sup>38</sup> בין ד' ראשי האגוז<sup>39</sup>. ד' ראשי חוליות למעלה ד' חיות וד' למטה ד'<sup>40</sup> כרובים. והאגוז עגול ומראה האופנים ומעשיהם כעין תרשיש. וקליפה דקה<sup>41</sup> הדבוקה לאוכל<sup>42</sup> האופן בתוך האופן. הגרעין צידו<sup>43</sup> כלפי<sup>44</sup> הקליפה<sup>45</sup> החיצונה אדום ירוק<sup>46</sup> ירקרק כקשת<sup>47</sup>. ה' חוליות לאגוז, ד' נקבות וא' זכרות<sup>48</sup>. כן ד' חיות הן וחיה אחת למעלה<sup>49</sup>. וכן בבראש<sup>50</sup> רבה ביום שני<sup>51</sup> ד' רקיע וא' לרקיע שמים ..... [כמראה] זהר

נולד ב' <sup>1</sup> וגו' א' <sup>2</sup> לכל א' <sup>3</sup> פתח חסר בג' <sup>4</sup> זהו – לראות חסר בג' <sup>5</sup> למעלה חסר בא' <sup>6</sup> וקליפי ארץ א' <sup>7</sup> ב' מוסיף: וכן [גרעין] הכרובים של אש העליונה וזהו שאמרו טלפי החיות כנגד כולם, ראשי החיות כנגד כולם קרני החיות כנגד כולם (חגיגה י"ג ע"א) למעלה רחב ולמטה קצר <sup>8</sup> כמו חסר בג' <sup>9</sup> החיצון א' <sup>10</sup> בין א' <sup>11</sup> הוא א' והיא ג' <sup>12</sup> למרחוק א' <sup>13</sup> בקליפה ג' <sup>14</sup> כמו שעוה ג' <sup>15</sup> קליפת א' ג' <sup>16</sup> ב' <sup>17</sup> ברד א' <sup>18</sup> שמואל ב' כ"ב י"ב. א' מביא את הפסוק תהלים י"ח י"ב: ישת חשך סתרו סביבותיו סכתו <sup>19</sup> ב' כעין סוכה אחרת א' סוכה בעץ אחת ג' <sup>20</sup> כשהאגוז לא א' <sup>21</sup> כמין א' <sup>22</sup> ב' שני ג' <sup>23</sup> בתוכה א' ג' <sup>24</sup> בקליפת א' ג' <sup>25</sup> קליפת א' קליפות ג' <sup>26</sup> ב' (עמ' 170 שורה 11) חסר בא' וגו' <sup>27</sup> ראשן ג' <sup>28</sup> לגרעינים א' <sup>29</sup> כנפיים ג' <sup>30</sup> וד' א' ג' <sup>31</sup> חיות א' <sup>32</sup> לחיות א' <sup>33</sup> בכנפים א' ג' עד כאן בטכסט א' <sup>34</sup> ובתוך ב' ובחתוך ג' <sup>35</sup> הלך ליפה ב' <sup>36</sup> וכשל רחמים ג' <sup>37</sup> ב' (עמ' 170 שורה 15), חסר בג' <sup>38</sup> ב', קליפה מתווכת בג' <sup>39</sup> ב', ראשן האגוז בג' <sup>40</sup> ב', וד' ג' <sup>41</sup> ג', בד' ב' <sup>42</sup> ג' קליפה ב' <sup>43</sup> ג', לגרעין ב' <sup>44</sup> ב', צידיו ג' <sup>45</sup> ג', כנגד ב' <sup>46</sup> ב', קליפה ג' <sup>47</sup> ב', ירק ג'



כעין החשמלה<sup>70</sup> לובן הגרעין עצמו. (ט' חוליות)<sup>71</sup> ט' מראות לכבוד ט' עלין לכל ענף<sup>72</sup> לאגוז<sup>73</sup> [ולכך סכנה לנטוע לאגוז].<sup>74</sup> ב' קליפות חיצוניות הכסא מותווך וממוצע<sup>75</sup> בין חשרת מים לחשכת<sup>76</sup> מים. וקליפה שחורה מבדלת<sup>77</sup> בין הגרעין לראש הזכרות. רצועה<sup>78</sup> של תפילין בראש הכבוד שיתברך ויתעלה לעד ולנצח. ותחת הגרעין חלול. בכסא הכבוד שתחתיו חלול כתיבה ונפשות צדיקים בתוכה.<sup>79</sup> היודע חכמ' האגוז ידע עומק המרכבה.

<sup>66</sup> כן האגוז והאגוז כקשת ב', האגוז ככסף כנחשת כקניות ג' <sup>67</sup> ג', החליות ד' זכרות ונקבות ב' <sup>68</sup> חסר בב' <sup>69</sup> שיני כתיב <sup>70</sup> ב' (עמ' 171 שורה 3) זוהר ג' <sup>71</sup> ב' ג'. עי' למעלה: ד' חוליות <sup>72</sup> ג', בכל כנף ב' <sup>73</sup> ב', חסר בג' <sup>74</sup> חסר בג' <sup>75</sup> בכסא מותווך וממוצע ג' בכסא ומותווך ב' <sup>76</sup> ובין חשכת ב' <sup>77</sup> מובדלת כתיב <sup>78</sup> ברצועה כתיב <sup>79</sup> וקליפה שחורה – צדיקים בתוכה חסר בב' <sup>80</sup> ב', חסר בג'.

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ALEXANDER ALTMANN





## *Anti-Christian polemic in medieval Bible commentaries*

THE rebuttal of christological interpretations of chapters and verses of the Hebrew Bible is not, as might at a first glance appear, a mere by-product of the activity and intention of the medieval Jewish commentators. It is an integral part of their work. Understood as such it represents a positive, important facet of the aim of all Jewish exegesis: to promote the knowledge and understanding of the true meaning of the Bible and thereby to keep the Jewish people, frequently subjected to fierce attack and persecution, alive and strong. The commentators were responsible spiritual leaders who wrote their commentaries in order to strengthen the faith of their generation in the future redemption, and to foster their trust and confidence in the truth of Judaism and in the divine promise of the coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. Rashi, Samuel b. Me'ir (Rashbam), Ibn Ezra, Qimḥi, Moses b. Naḥman (Ramban), Abravanel and many others in Spain, Northern and Southern France and Germany—most of them disciples of Rashi—were alive to the great issues of their time and strove valiantly to maintain a living Judaism. This struggle amidst a hostile, aggressive Christian environment—characterized by the Crusades and religious disputations—was thus a positive force even where defensively arrayed around the plain, literal meaning of the Bible as against christological typology and the allegorizing tendency proffered by contemporary Latin exegetes; it displays itself in a Jewish-Christian dialogue which flourished the more vigorously the more hostile the Church showed itself, and in disputations forced upon an unwilling Jewry. On the other side, the Church tried not only to convert the Jews; it was also combatting Judaizing tendencies discernible in various sects and heresies in its own midst.

Anti-Christian polemic as we find it throughout the medieval commentaries is, in fact, a part of the *wikkūaḥ*-literature of the Middle Ages, especially from the eleventh century onwards. It is bold, fearless and direct; it exhibits the same courage and determination as that exhibited by Jewish representatives at the disputations in Paris, Barcelona and Tortosa. R. Yeḥiel of Paris, Ramban<sup>1</sup>, Albo and others asserted the Jewish position freely,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. I. F. BAER, *le-viqqoreth ha-Wiḡquḥim shel rabbi yeḥi'el mi-Paris we-shel rabbi mosheh ben naḥman*, *Tarbiz* ii, 2, pp. 172 f. The disputations

when they refuted the Christian arguments for the divine nature of Jesus and his Messiahship in front of an illustrious assembly of the highest dignitaries of Church and State. They applied the method of *peshat* to the messianic passages in the Hebrew Bible and appealed to past and contemporary history. The same applies to such specific anti-Christian tracts as Joseph Qimḥi's *sēfer ha-Bērith*, Lippmann Mühlhausen's *Sēfer niṣṣāḥōn* and many others. Admittedly it was less dangerous to write about these matters in commentaries. But the Church was not slow in spotting this polemic and subjected the manuscripts of these commentaries to close scrutiny. The offensive passages were made illegible. Yet, sufficient manuscripts escaped the censor, and critical editions of Rashi, Rashbam, Abraham ibn Ezra, Ramban and others, based on such manuscripts, enable us today to correlate this polemic with its authors' positive exposition of the Bible and to appreciate the living issues reflected in medieval exegesis<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that it was

have been thoroughly investigated by BERNHARD BLUMENKRANZ in a number of comprehensive studies, as e.g.: *Die jüdischen Beweisgründe im Religionsgespräch mit den Christen in den christlich-lateinischen Sonderschriften des 5. bis 11. Jahrhunderts* (*Theologische Zeitschrift* iv, 2, 1948, pp. 119-147). The second part of this basic study deals with the Jewish arguments as found in these tracts. Also *Altercatio Aecclesiae contra Synagogam* (Strasbourg 1954). He stresses the importance of exegesis in this matter and relates the shifts in arguments to the changed situation created by the Crusades and inner-Christian struggles. See also his *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du moyen âge sur les Juifs et le Judaïsme* in *REJ*, NS., ix, xi, xiii, xiv where he gives valuable information about these authors and their anti-Jewish writings. Cf. also his new critical edition, with introduction, of *Gisleberti Crispini Disputatio Judei et Christiani*, Utrecht/Antwerp, 1954 and his *Juden und Jüdisches in christlichen Wundererzählungen. Ein unbekanntes Gebiet religiöser Polemik* (*Theol. Zeitschr.*, X 1954, pp. 417-46).

<sup>2</sup> The following critical editions were used in preparing this paper. *Rashi: Parshandatha* ed. J. MAARSEN, Part II (Isaiah), Jerusalem 1933; Part I (Minor Prophets), Jerusalem 1936. To my regret I could not obtain Part III (Psalms). A. J. LEVY, *Rashi on Ezekiel xl-xlvi*, Philadelphia, 1931. For the psalms I had to rely on S. POZNANSKI's *Eliezer of Beaugency* (Introduction), and on JUDAH ROSENTHAL's contribution to the Rashi vol. published by the World Jewish Congress, Hebrew portion, pp. 45 ff. under the title *Ha-Pulmus ha-'anti-nošeri be-Rashi 'al ha-Tenakh*. *Rashbam* (R. Samuel b. Me'ir): Commentary on the Pentateuch, ed. D. ROSIN, Breslau, 1881. *Abraham b. Ezra*: M. Friedlaender, *Essays on the writings of Abraham ibn Ezra, IV*, London, 1877. *Radaq* (R. David Qimḥi): Isaiah i-xxxix, ed. L. FINKELSTEIN, New York, 1926; Hosea, ed. H. COHEN, New York, 1929; Nahum, ed. W. WINDFUHR, Giessen, 1927.

Psalms: S. SCHILLER-SZINESSY, *The First Book of Psalms with the Longer Commentary of R. David Qimchi*, Cambridge, 1883; S. I. ESTERSON's edition of psalms xlii-lxxii in *HUCA*, X, 1935, pp. 335 ff. No critical edition of the third and fourth books exists, but the fifth book was critically edited by J.



the correct understanding of the Bible, together with the fulfilment of the *mišwoth* according to the *Halakhah*, that secured Jewish survival.

It is well known that the close attention to grammar and lexicography from Gaon Sa'adya onwards enabled medieval Jewish commentators to get at the *peshat*, the natural, plain, simple meaning of Scripture, not as is sometimes stated, the rationalist meaning. Logical or rational this exposition is, but not rationalistic in the philosophical sense of the term<sup>3</sup>. It is less often realized, however, that the retreat of the *derash*—it could not be given up since Judaism cannot ever dispense with it—and the consequent stress on the *peshat* was directly caused and made inevitable by the Christians' attack and their attempt at converting the Jews. In turn, the application of this method reacted on the Christian exegetes who had to answer the challenge. They recognized the plain sense as one of the four legitimate ways of Christian interpretation of Holy Writ; *historia* corresponds to *peshat*. It is well to remember—as Isaak Heinemann has reminded us<sup>4</sup>—that Origen and his circle speak of the Jews as a *carnalis populus*, as *amici literae*, and call the literal meaning the *sensus Judaicus*. In the later Middle Ages, when the Jewish-Christian controversy (we leave the Jewish-Muslim one out of account) was once again a live issue, we find that the *sensus Judaicus* was the best, sharpest and most effective weapon that the Jews could wield in the positive defence of Judaism. The Christians found support for their own

BOSNIAK, The Commentary on the fifth Book of Psalms, New York, 1954. Radaq's anti-Christian remarks were collected and are appended *inter alia* to Th. Hackspan's edition of Lippmann Mühlhausen's *Sefer Nišṣaḥon*, Nuremberg 1644 under the title *Tosefeth teshuvoth Radaq*. I also used the Isny edition 1541, and the Cremona edition, 1561, and the Latin translation by Genebrardus under the title: *Responsa simul et argumenta, quae Rabbi David Kimhi contra Christianos suis ad Psalmos commentariis inseruit*, being pp. 63-105 of his treatise *R. Joseph Albonis, R. Davidis Kimhi, et alius cuiusdam Hebraei anonymi argumenta, quibus nonnullos fidei Christianae articulos oppugnant*, Paris 1566. MS. Add. 1574 of the Cambridge University Library has been subjected to Christian censorship and the offensive passages have either been erased or blacked out; but they are legible under ultra-violet light. The variants are unimportant, e.g. we find *אמונתם* for *ישו הנוצרי* or *אותו האיש*.

<sup>3</sup> So, e.g. B. SMALLEY, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*<sup>2</sup>, Oxford 1952, p. 103, where she refers to the Jewish teachers of Hugh of St Victor as belonging to "the contemporary North French school of rationalist exegetes founded by Rashi".

<sup>4</sup> *Die Wissenschaftliche Allegoristik des jüdischen Mittelalters* (HUCA xxiii 1, 1950-51).

use of the *peshat* in Augustine who allowed the literal meaning, so long as the Christians adhered to the *sensus mysticus*. The twelfth century Victorines, Hugh and Andrew of St. Victor<sup>5</sup>, provide the most telling example. Sa'adya asserts that we must accept the literal meaning except when it contradicts sense perception and reason, another unequivocal passage in Scripture, or trustworthy tradition<sup>6</sup>. It is a well known fact that the medieval Jewish religious philosophers distinguished between the external and the inner, real meaning of Scripture, but they were careful to exclude the application of the latter to the laws.

If proof were needed that the concentration on the *peshat* was the direct answer to the christological challenge we need only look at Abraham b. Ezra's introduction to his Commentary on the *Torah*, where he opposes his own method of interpretation to four others. The first method is there attributed to "the sages of the uncircumcised" who maintain that the whole *Torah* consists of riddles and allegories, not only the whole of Genesis but also all the laws and statutes and ordinances. Everything is a hint, an allusion (*remez*). Thus the twelve tribes typify the twelve apostles, the woman with seed the Church, etc. Ibn Ezra castigates this method as vanity and hot air and insists that every commandment, every word must be interpreted in conformity with what is written, while admitting that the *Torah* contains secrets like the tree of knowledge or paradise. He appeals to the reason implanted in us by

<sup>5</sup> See the important researches of BERYL SMALLEY: *Andrew of St. Victor, Abbot of Wigmore: A Twelfth century Hebraist (Recherches Théologiques Anciennes et Médiévales, x, pp. 358 ff.)*; *The School of Andrew of St. Victor (ibid. xi, pp. 145 ff.)*. The use of Jewish exegesis is clear from such remarks as in *Hebreo, tradunt Hebrei*, etc. See especially pp. 149 f., 153, on Herbert of Bosham (*ibid.*, xviii). Cf. also the detailed, informative study by R. J. LOEWE, *Herbert of Bosham's Commentary on Jerome's Hebrew Psalter (Biblica xxxiv, pp. 44-77; 159-192; 275-298)* which traces Herbert's sources. Dr. SMALLEY states in her *The Study of the Bible . . .*, p. 110 that Richard criticises Andrew for 'judaizing', i.e. accepting the Jewish exposition as the literal sense of prophecy. It is interesting to note that Bernard of Clairvaux used the term *judaizare* for Christian moneylenders, thus equating it with usury. Despite H. HAILPERIN's justified criticisms (cf. *Historia Judaica*, iv, pp. 163 ff.) this book is remarkable both for its comprehensiveness and its wealth of relevant, hitherto largely unknown detail, especially on the Hebrew attainment of the Victorines (Hugh, Andrew, Richard), and its legacy in the works of Peter the Comestor, Peter the Chanter and Stephen Langton.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. K. *al-amānāt wa-l-i'tiqādāt*, ed. S. LANDAUER, Leiden 1880, p. 212, S. ROSENBLATT's English translation (*Yale Judaica Series*), p. 265, and A. ALTMANN's abridged English version (*Philosophia Judaica*, Oxford 1946) pp. 157 f.

God, to testify to the *peshat*<sup>7</sup>. The guiding principle, from Tamudical times onwards had to be 'eyn miqra' yoṣe' miydey peshuṭo; it does not only mean that every verse in the *Torah* must be explained in accordance with its literal, plain sense, but also that it can never lose its plain meaning whatever hidden or inner meaning is attributed to it<sup>8</sup>. Heinemann is therefore right when he speaks of *Mehrdeutung*, but not *Umdeutung*, i.e. it is legitimate to give a verse more than one meaning, but it is not permitted to explain the literal sense away by an allegorizing interpretation. Allegory must be distinguished from metaphor, a metaphorical exposition of anthropomorphisms is necessary, since God is not a body. It is only the *Song of Songs* that is generally accepted to be an allegory. The philosophical exposition of the Bible in its non-preceptive part is, however, often *Umdeutung* rather than *Mehrdeutung*.

In our context it is significant that the medieval commentators link the *peshat* with the "answer (or rejoinder) to the Christians" and thus establish a clear connection between the literal method and anti-Christian polemic. They were in fact less concerned with convincing Christians than with reassuring and fortifying Jews. But they could do so only by providing their generation with an answer to the Christian claims so formulated as to uphold the Jewish position in a manner at once satisfying and convincing for a Jew when hard pressed.

It is for this reason we find such expressions as Rashi's *lephi mashma'o we-litheshuvah la-Minim* or Rashbam's *peshat zeh teshuvah la-Minim*. *Minim* here means Christians just as in the anti-Christian tracts, where *min* is contrasted with *ma'amin*, i.e. the Jew who has the right belief. Sometimes we find *noṣerim* (so often in Qimḥi's commentary on *Psalms*), or *to'im*, the designation for the Crusaders in the Hebrew reports concerning the Crusades, or *ṭo'anin*, i.e. objectors, in Abraham b. Ezra, or the abbreviation 'akum. At times Rashi defines his *minim* by the addition of *ha-Mesithim 'eth yisra'el la'avodhah zarah* in order to indicate the grave danger that threatened his generation<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> See M. FRIEDLAENDER, *op. cit.* (note 2, above), pp. 1 ff. of the Hebrew appendix.

<sup>8</sup> In a forthcoming article R. LOEWE will, so he informs me, show grounds for questioning whether it is legitimate to render *peshuṭo* as *literal, plain sense* in this context and will suggest an alternative explanation.

<sup>9</sup> In his comment on *Prov. ii: 12*, quoted by JUDAH ROSENTHAL, *op. cit.*, p. 49. This article is throughout relevant for the question under discussion.



Here we must restrict ourselves to the consideration of the actual commentaries on the Bible, and leave aside the records of the religious disputations, as well as the specific anti-Christian tracts and the anti-Christian polemic contained in such religious-philosophical works as Sa'adya's *'Emunoth we-dhe'oth* and Maimonides' *Moreh*<sup>10</sup>.

How topical and relevant Qimhi's anti-Christian utterances were, can be gathered from his regular use of the phrase "if somebody were to object you must answer" or "the Christians interpret this psalm [as referring] to Jesus" (or "to that man" or "to their faith"), but you must answer them . . .". That this is not simply a rhetorical figure of speech, but was dictated by necessity and constituted a very real practical help in the Jewish-Christian controversy is clear from the context of contemporary history<sup>11</sup>. It also seems to point to an actual dialogue between individual Jews and Christians, not necessarily of the learned only on both sides, and proves the whole controversy to be a real life issue, a common daily life feature. If it had been a purely literary discussion, Qimhi might have been expected to specify the Christian opponents by name<sup>12</sup>. It is obvious that the terminology employed by the Jews often corresponds to that of their Christian opponents, e.g. *gufanith* equals *corporealiter*, *ruhanith* *spiritualiter*. Once Qimhi makes a pun when he declares the Christian interpretation—*ruhanith*—to be *ruah*, wind. Again, the occurrence of these terms need not presuppose the study of Latin commentaries, but rather reflects the personal contact of Jews with Christian exegetes, just as expressions like *Judaei dicunt*, *Hebraei tradunt* point to oral communication. Even where a literal quotation can be traced to Rashi or Rashbam it is not necessarily always derived from their commentaries, but can have been communicated to the Victorines or Herbert of Bosham by word of mouth—notwithstanding the Hebrew attainment of these medieval Christian Biblical scholars.

<sup>10</sup> Characteristic examples are given by W. BACHER in his *Die Bibelepexese der jüdischen Religionsphilosophen des Mittelalters vor Maimūni*, Strasbourg 1892 and *Die Bibelepexese Moses Mainmūni's*, Strasbourg 1897.

<sup>11</sup> In J. KATZ' forthcoming book *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* a chapter will be devoted to this whole aspect of the subject, so Mr. Loewe informs me.

<sup>12</sup> This does not render a detailed investigation of the Latin commentaries of his contemporary Christian scholars superfluous. Later in this paper a passage will be quoted in which Qimhi attacks Jerome: but it is difficult to say whether a Christian divine told him, or whether he was acquainted with the Vulgate directly or through quotation in a commentary or polemical treatise.

## II.

What were the issues at stake in this battle for the truth of the Bible, its meaning and significance? Broadly speaking, there were two main Christian claims with a positive and a negative side to them. The first was, as is well known, that Jesus was the son of God, a divine-human being, and was the Messiah promised in the Hebrew Bible. The second issue was the Christian claim that by his coming Jesus had set aside the *Torah* in its material sense and had given it a purely spiritual existence and meaning. Christ's law was claimed to be much superior to Moses' law, as e.g. in a commentary coming from the school of Peter Abelard<sup>13</sup>.

The first problem, that revolving round Jesus, is dealt with by practically all medieval Jewish commentators, but most extensively by Qimḥi, who was not a disciple and champion of Maimonides for nothing<sup>14</sup>. He correctly raises in objection the Jewish concept of

<sup>13</sup> Cf. A. LANDGRAF, *Commentarius Cantabrigiensis in Epistolas Pauli e Schola Petri Abaelardi* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1937), i, pp. 278-280, also ii, 1939, p. 65. The passage runs in full (i, 278) *Moses enim, qui homo spiritualis erat non solum legem ad historiam intelligebat, sed etiam mystice*, with reference to Ex. xxxiv: 33; Is. ix: 6 and Zech. ix: 9, and p. 279: *Lex autem Moysi ad tempus data fuit, que tandem evacuata est. Lex vero Christi tamquam perpetua est, cui alia lex non succedet*.

<sup>14</sup> His commentary on Psalms abounds in philosophical explanations. In the introduction he discusses the nature of prophecy and of prophets as distinct from men inspired by the *ruah ha-Qodesh* in the manner of Maimonides (cf. *Guide*, ii, xxxvi). In the body of the commentary the influence of Abraham b. Ezra is also very marked. Examples of philosophical comment are: Ps. viii: 2, the tetragrammaton is distinct from the other divine names in that it is not an attribute (SCHILLER-SZINESSY, *op. cit.*, p. 25); v. 5, against those who maintain the eternity of the world (p. 26) עֲצָבָאוֹת equals נִלְגָּלִים, a cosmological explanation. Ps. xv: 2 gives Qimḥi an opportunity to state that philosophical demonstration can prove the existence and unity of God. On xvi: 8 he quotes *Guide* iii, li. Concerning xvii: 15 he claims that he only who has studied psychology can understand these matters. Moses' intellect was *intellectus in actu*; the whole passage seems to come from the *Guide*, III, li. On xix: 2 he refers to *Guide* II. v; commenting on v. 8 he compares the soul to a stranger in the body like in a foreign land. On xxv: 9 he quotes Ibn Gabirol's *Sefer tiqqun middoth ha-Nefesh* (also on xxxv: 10 and xxxvii: 8, 23); on v. 10. Maimonides. Ps. xxviii, like xxvii, contains a request to God to free the Psalmist from the needs of the body so that he might concentrate on those of the soul, i.e. the service of God through which transgressions are atoned and the soul draws near to God. Here is his definition of עֲבוֹדַת הָאֱלֹהִים (on v. 5): וְהָיָא לְהַבִּין בַּחֲכָמָה הַטֵּבָע וּבַפְעֻלוֹתָיו וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ; וּמִשָּׁם יִתְבּוֹנֵן כַּח מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים שֶׁהִכֵּל מֵאֲתוֹ, וְהוּא הַסִּבָּה הָרִאשׁוֹנָה... The importance of the study of physics in the service of religion may be noted. On xxxvi: 11 he defines the wise (philosophers) as those who occupy themselves with the *Torah*, its commandments and with metaphysics, in contrast to the יִשְׂרָאֵלִים who confine their study to the two first mentioned

the absolute, simple unity and uniqueness of God. The divinity of Jesus interested the Jews, however, less than his alleged messianic character. The refutation of this Christian claim is accompanied by the positive assertion that none of the messianic prophecies and promises had been fulfilled during the second Jewish commonwealth—in the lifetime of Jesus—but that the final redemption is still to come and, what is more, is imminent. It is thus clear that Christian attack and persecution provided a strong incentive for the messianic expectancy of the time, and constituted an additional argument for the messianic interpretation of many a prophetic passage in the Bible. *Peshaṭ* is joined by the appeal to history, in order to prove the fallacy of the Christian claim and to strengthen the Jewish belief in the divine promise of final redemption<sup>15</sup>.

and consequently attain to דעת הבורא by way of tradition only. Similarly, he states on cxi: 10 that first comes למוד התורה and then חכמת הפילוסוף which confirms and establishes the former correctly. Here we have the philosophical justification of religious truth. In the long introduction to cxix Qimḥi discusses the several ways to תיקון המדות, the strongest of them all being the seventh: ראיית השכל וידעתו; but there remains an eighth way, that of tradition, and we are obliged to believe in it in every respect. On cxxxvi: 4 he speaks of the forms as the separate intelligences which are neither bodies nor like bodies, and which the human eye cannot comprehend. A similar, more extended philosophical comment is offered on cxlyiii, strongly reminiscent of Maimonides' *Guide*. These examples may suffice to show how philosophical comment is employed by Qimḥi as a legitimate means to bring out the meaning of the psalms, in conjunction with *peshaṭ*, contemporary events, messianic hope and the final redemption.

<sup>15</sup> Reference will be made to such interpretations below, when discussing Rashi, and some such comments may be mentioned here from Qimḥi's commentary on *Psalms*: x: 16, on the Exile and the return of the kingdom to Israel; xii, on the future redemption; xiii and xiv, on the Exile; xxi is dealt with later under Qimḥi; xxii, on the Exile and redemption; xxiii, on David, or Israel's return from Exile; xxiv: 9 on the redeemer; xxv, xxvi and xxvii are concerned with this world and the world to come; contrary to previous interpreters, Qimḥi refers *Ps.* xxix to the future, to the days of the Messiah, possibly to the wars of Gog and Magog. xxxvi: 8 (חסדך) refers to the world to come. cviii is interpreted messianically, although most of it is identical with lvii and lx which refer to David, this psalm refers to the seed of David to whom will fall the kingdom at the time of the final redemption of Israel; cxvii refers to the messianic redemption; cxviii either to David or to the time of the Messiah. cxx: 2 refers to the nations in whose midst Israel suffers in Exile, also v. 6; likewise cxxi: 3, 4, while v. 8 refers to the return from Exile to the land of Israel; cxxii is *מאמר בני הגלות*; v. 6 refers to *ערלים ושמעאלים*; on cxxiii Qimḥi expresses his trust in God "who alone will redeem us from Exile," cxxiv refers to Israel in Exile, as does cxxvi which also points to the time of redemption; cxxvii contains an allusion to King Messiah; v. 2 is interpreted messianically with a reference to Muslims and Christians and the war that will be waged between them until the redeemer comes. cxxviii is understood of the Exile and redemption and ensuing peace for Israel. cxxix and cxxx express the hope of redemption as on



Undoubtedly prompted by the Christian attitude to the *Torah*, Abravanel<sup>16</sup> at length deals with the question whether the *Torah* will be abrogated in its entirety, or in part, or not at all when the Messiah comes. It shows—as we also find in Qimḥi—how the validity of the *Torah* is bound up with the person and coming of the Messiah.

To repeat, the Jewish commentators intended by their polemic to give courage and hope to their sorely tried generation: and in rejecting the claim that Jesus shared in the divine nature of God the father, they clarified and emphasised the Jewish concept of the one and only God. In refuting, in the light of past and contemporary history, the claim that Jesus was the promised Messiah, they heightened the eschatological expectancy of their generation and offered practical support for its successful resistance to Christian pressure even if this meant dying a martyr's death in defence of the ancestral faith. The troubled state of affairs was, to the Jews of the Middle Ages, a clear sign that the promised redemption of Israel and mankind was at hand, that persecution and suffering foreshadowed divine intervention to secure personal and national

previous occasions. cxxxiii refers to the Messiah, the rebuilt temple, and the world to come. cxxxv refers to Solomon or King Messiah; v. 14 means that Israel is now in Exile but God will lead him back to his inheritance. v. 20 and cxxxvi: 1—Israel and all mankind will worship and praise God. cxxxvi: 23 is referred to the Babylonian exile or more correctly to the present one. cxxxvii: 7-9 refers to the Babylonian exile; the psalmist also foresaw בְּרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ the exile of the Second Commonwealth, when Titus destroyed the Temple and the Roman empire, the children of Edom, led Israel into exile. cxlv, *end* refers to the ingathering of the exiles, as does cxlvi; v. 2 means that God only can send salvation to Israel and to every individual. Just as He sent Cyrus to redeem Israel from the Babylonian exile, so will He redeem Israel in the future through the kings of the nations, if Israel in Exile puts his trust in God alone. Qimḥi stresses throughout this psalm God's rule over all the nations after the redemption of Israel from his present Exile. It is worth noting that Qimḥi naturally reflects the tension between particularism and universalism so characteristic of Judaism. cxlvii is interpreted with reference to the Exile and redemption from Exile which for Qimḥi is an article of faith. cxlviii: 14 manifests God's omnipotence as exemplified in His redeeming and gathering Israel from the nations. cxlix refers to the war with Gog and Magog, with Israel praying for redemption. cl hints at the thirteen *middoth* by which God rules the world (an echo of the *Guide*). God will be magnified and sanctified by the nations for delivering Israel. Turning briefly to Isaiah, we note that Qimḥi sees in xxiv, contrary to traditional exegesis, a prophecy of the future, as is clear from the end of the chapter. xxv: 5, Israel will be saved; xxvi: 1 refers to the time of salvation; v. 20 refers to Gog and Magog; xxvii again points to the time of salvation.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. E. I. J. ROSENTHAL, *Don Isaac Abravanel . . .*, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, xxi, 2, Oct. 1937, pp. 445 ff., especially 464-67, 470 f.

salvation. The contemporary scene explains the frequent references to the present Exile and the marked underlining of the messianic, redemptive import of many passages in the prophets, in *Daniel* and in the *Psalms*<sup>17</sup>.

### III

What has been said may now be illustrated by reference to Rashi, Rashbam, Abraham b. Ezra and in particular to David Qimḥi's commentary on the Psalms.

It is not surprising that Rashi, who for all his profound learning was also a man of affairs and an acute observer of the contemporary scene, should relate prophecies to his own age. For him *Micah* vii: 8 refers to "Babylon and guilty Rome". By Rome he understands Christian Rome, which as such is the target of his attack in the form of the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy. His commentary on *Isaiah* contains many references to Rome, e.g. xxiii: 1, the *Kittim*; *ibid.* v. 5 is Tyre to be understood as *edhom rumi* or literally Tyre (*ṣor mammash*)<sup>18</sup>? But on xxvi: 5 and xxvii: 10 he leaves no doubt<sup>19</sup>. While Rashi does not refer *Zech.* ix: 4 to the Second Commonwealth, as the Christians do, but to the days of the Messiah, he allows the last verses only of the book of *Daniel* to apply to the final redemption and sees in the bulk of the book allusions to political events at the time of the Maccabees<sup>20</sup>. Passages like *Is.* xi: 12, xxiii: 18, xxiv: 16, 18, chapters xxvi, xxvii, xxviii and xxxiv point to the Messiah and the future redemption of Israel<sup>21</sup>, as does *Jer.* xxxi: 39<sup>22</sup>. He opposes the Christian interpretation of *Is.* vii: 14 (*ha'almah*)<sup>23</sup> and of ix: 5f. He is at one with

<sup>17</sup> See notes 15, 16, above, and what is said of Rashi and Abraham b. Ezra, *infra*.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. MAARSEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 f.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 65, 69. Qimḥi cites this as one explanation without mentioning Rashi by name.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. I. F. BAER, *Rashi we-ha-Meṣi'uth ha-historith shel zemanno*, (Tarbiz, xx, 1950, pp. 320 ff., especially 326 ff.; also JUDAH ROSENTHAL, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. MAARSEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 38, 62, 63, 65, 67 (סימני ישועה וגאולה), 68, 71, 86.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. S. POZNANSKI's introduction to his edition of Eliezer of Beaugency's Commentaries on Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets, Warsaw, 1910-13, p. xx.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. MAARSEN, p. 23. Rashi refers it to the wife of the prophet who will, *ברוך הקדש*, call him *עמונאל*. Qimḥi also refers it to the wife of the prophet, or to Ahaz, which seems to him to be the correct view since if she were the prophet's wife she would be named *נביאה* as in *Is.* viii: 3 and he is the son of the king in accordance with *Is.* v: 8. *העלמה* is young in years, she is not a virgin *כדברי התועים*, i.e. the Christians. Qimḥi also quotes his father's *ס' הברית* for

other exegetes in admitting *sar shalom* only as the name to be given to Hezekiah, whereas all the other names refer to God; *me'attah we'adh 'olam* cannot refer to Jesus, who was born 500 years later<sup>24</sup>. Of equal relevance are some of his comments on certain psalms. E.g. he understands *ben* in *Ps. ii* to mean the beloved (*haviv*) of God, which implies a rejection of the Christian claim that Jesus is meant. Or, he rejects the traditional interpretation of *Ps. ix* on linguistic grounds and applies it to the future redemption of Israel (v. 2); v. 14 *haneneni* means "now in the Golah", and *meromemi* "at the time of your redemption". Vv. 14-20 of *Ps. x* are applied by him to Israel after the dominion of Ishmael and Rome over the nation has been broken and they have been driven from his [Israel's] land; God will then be king for ever (v. 16). *Ps. xxi* is referred by the Rabbis to King Messiah, but Rashi thinks it right to refer it to king David after his marriage to Bathsheba. *Ps. xxii: 2* is a prayer by David for the future; v. 27 points to "the time of our redemption, the days of our Messiah". *Ps. lxviii* is explained historically and as pointing to Israel's future redemption.<sup>25</sup> As in his interpretation of *Ps. xxi*, in that of the Servant Songs in *Isaiah* Rashi departs from the Rabbis, and it is quite likely that he did so in order to avoid any possibility of a Christological application. He applies chapters lii and liii of *Isaiah* to the people of Israel as a whole, not like the Rabbis to the Messiah, nor with the Christians to Jesus as Messiah. On the other hand, chapters xlix and 1 have the prophet himself in mind.<sup>26</sup> *Jer. xi: 19* refers to the prophet, not to the Church as the Christians say, and *Zech. vi: 12* has in mind, Zerubbabel, not Jesus.<sup>27</sup> Here again Rashi differs from the Rabbis, who apply this verse to the

an answer to the Christians. The sign was given to Ahaz, not to Jesus who lived more than 400 years later. Cf. also B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Die jüdischen Beweisgründe* . . . (see no. 1, above) 11, pp. 134 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. MAARSEN, pp. 31 f. with his notes on עולם ... מעתה ... ולתשובת המינים: שהוא שם לטעותם יש להשיבם מהו מעתה והלא לא בא אותו טעות עד לסוף ש' נצחון. 300 years should be 500 years, according to the Vulgate. By טעות Jesus is meant. Rashi interprets xi: 12, xxiii: 18 messianically; xxiv on the future redemption of Israel; xxvi: 6 refers to King Messiah like *Zech. ix: 9*; v. 17 likewise, and this contains "signs of salvation and redemption". xxvii: 2, xxviii: 16, xxxiv are all interpreted messianically.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. on psalm xxi: 2 POZNANSKI, *op. cit.*, p. xx, who adds from an uncensored MS. לפי פשוט ולתשובת המינים; v. 2 does not refer to Jesus, as the Vulgate translates. The messianic references are culled from מקראות גדולות.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. JUDAH ROSENTHAL, *op. cit.*, pp. 52 f.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



Messiah. The Church refers the whole matter to Jesus, but Rashi sees in it an allusion to the Second Commonwealth.<sup>28</sup>

Rashbam offers a unique interpretation of the controversial passage in *Gen.* xlix: 10 'ad ki yavo shiloh: "until Judah come to Shiloh means until the king of Judah, i.e. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, comes to Shiloh which is the name of a place, near Shechem". He goes on to say: "this *peshat* is an answer to the Christians, for it is only written as the name of a town . . . it is not written *shello*, as the Jews say, nor *sheliaḥ*, as the Christians say".<sup>29</sup>

Abraham b. Ezra may once more be quoted with an interesting explanation of *Gen.* xxvii: 40.<sup>30</sup> He first gives examples of how Edom served Judah in the days of Hyrkanus II and Agrippa, identifies the *Kittim* with Rome and ends thus: "there were a few men who believed in a man they made into God . . . Rome believed in the days of Constantine who had renewed [*i.e.* established] the whole religion and placed a representation of that man [*i.e.* Jesus] upon his standard. But there were not in the world any who observed the new law except a few Edomites, therefore Rome is called Edom".

## IV

More evidence of anti-Christian polemic could be adduced from many medieval commentators, such as the successors of Rashi in Northern France, Joseph Bekhor Shor, Joseph Qara, Eliezer of Beaugency and others. In his valuable introduction to Eliezer's commentaries S. Poznanski has shown their important

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* For further examples see this study. For Rashi, Rome represents the Church; in his comment on *Micah* vii: 8 (MAARSEN, ad loc.) he refers to it by the term רומי החייבת and the Christians are idolaters, who try to pervert the Jews to idolatry.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. RASHBAM's Commentary, ed. D. ROSIN, pp. 71 f. with n. 6, quoting (p. 72) the Vulgate's *mittendus est*; also A. POZNANSKI, *Schiloh*, Leipzig, 1904, p. xv and S. POZNANSKI, *op. cit.*, p. xxxix. Rashi read *shello* and referred it to the Messiah whose is the kingdom, or *shay lo* who deserves homage (cf. *Schiloh*, loc. cit.) Further examples from Rashbam's commentary are: on *Ex.* iii: 22 he remarks למינים פשוטו ותשובה למינים and *Ex.* xx: 13 (ed. ROSIN, p. 111, with notes 18, 19). The Vulgate is referred to by the term לשון לטין; also *Lev.* xi: 3, 34 and xix: 19. Rashbam uses the expressions ולפי פשוטו של מקרא and ולמינים אמרתי, which seems to indicate personal contact. Passages like *Ex.* xi: 2 and *Deut.* xxii: 5, 9 show his emphasis on the *peshat*. Cf. also D. ROSIN, R. Samuel b. Meir als Schrifiterklärer, Breslau, 1880, especially pp. 61, 77 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. גדולות מקראות, ad loc. I owe this reference to Dr. E. WIESENBERG.

contribution to biblical exegesis and has collected a large number of such anti-Christian comments.<sup>31</sup>

All in common have a strict adherence to the *peshaṭ* and a refusal to admit an allegorical interpretation. They go far beyond Rashi, on whom they lean heavily. *Peshaṭ*, now based on a far better knowledge and appreciation of the language of the Bible than hitherto, implies, as stated before, rational as well as historical argument. Naturally, we have to realize that logic is not necessarily an adequate and successful weapon when used against an opponent where faith is concerned. The value of this anti-Christian polemic in Bible commentaries consists, to repeat, largely in the practical help it provided for Jewish life and thought which were equally in danger from Christian conversionist zeal at all times during the Middle Ages, and not infrequently from open persecution also.<sup>32</sup> This is clear from the often quoted formula "an answer to the Christians" or from Qimḥi's more personal phrase "you must answer".

Qimḥi's "answers" deserve detailed and careful study in the light of contemporary Christian exegesis, since Narbonne was the seat of an archbishop. It has already been stated that his familiarity with Christian exegesis is evident from his rejoinders, and that his knowledge may to a large extent at least be oral and not necessarily based on his personal study of Christian commentaries. I must content myself in what follows with presenting some of the more telling comments selected in the main from his commentary on the *Psalms*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. S. POZNANSKI, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxvii on Joseph Qara's comment on *Deut.* xiv: 1; many passages in Joseph Bekhor Shor's Commentary, e.g. on *Lev.* xviii: 5; *Deut.* xxviii: 63; xxxi: 16; xxxii: 21 and, in particular, on *Num.* xii: 8 (p. lxix) against the Christian claim that Moses' words are *כלמר חידה ... אליגוריא* ומשל ואינו מה שהוא אומר ומהפכין הנבואה לדבר אחר ומוציאין הדבר ממשמעותו לגמרי ... שאע"פ שהעתיקו את התורה מלשון הקדש ללשון Vulgate) לא נתן להם הק לב לדעת ועינים לראות ואזנים לשמוע. According to POZNANSKI, J. Bekhor Shor commented on almost all the passages which the Christians claim as foundations for their faith; in particular he polemized against their concept of the trinity, images, Jesus' birth without a father, etc. POZNANSKI cites many examples from the *תוספות* בעלי תשובה which are relevant to our question, especially pp. ci; cviii, introduced by *תשובה* למינים, and finally Eliezer of Beaugency's "answers", e.g. on *Is.* ix: 5 against the Christian claim that all the names refer to Jesus, the son of God (p. clxiii): אבל ודאי שקר בימינו חייפו ספריהם לקרא ויקרא שמו להסב: הם רשעי ישראל ובני פריצי עמנו or on *Ezek.* v: 4: כל השמות יל הילד .... כגון ישו וחבריו שהתעו את ישראל ונכשלו ונהרגו.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. note 11, *supra*.

Ps. ii.<sup>33</sup> "It is not right to say 'son of God' of flesh and blood, for the son is of a kind with the father. He to whom God says *you are my son* must be of His kind and God must be like him. Further, if anybody were to say: *I have today born you* and the born one is of the same kind as the begetter, then answer them: 'in divinity it is not possible [to assume] father and son, for the Deity cannot be divided. God is no body that can be divided. His unity is absolute without addition, distraction or divisibility'. You must tell them further that 'we can speak of father and son only if the father is first in time and the son goes forth from the strength of the father. Hence the son must be later than the father. But then no tri-unity is possible. If both were co-existent all the time you should call them twin brothers, not father and son, begetter and born'. Answer him who says it is not possible to call any one son of God who is not of the [same] kind of divinity that we can speak of God metaphorically only, as e.g. when we say *the mouth of God, the eyes, the ears of God*. We call him who fulfils His mission and His commandments 'son of God', just as a son fulfils the commandments of his father . . . 'Again, you say of God that the father said to the son *ask of me and I will give you nations as your inheritance*. If the son is God why should he ask his father? Has he no power over nations and the ends of the earth like Him?' . . . They might point out that this happened after He had become flesh. God has referred to his humanity, promised so-to-speak inheritance to the son as man. But this is not so, because he had no kingdom while in the flesh nor any dominion over any nation. If they say that the psalm speaks of their faith . . . [then reply to them] that the majority, be they Jews or Muslims, have not accepted it. Now, I have taught you what answer to give them concerning this psalm. You must add from your own knowledge in accordance with these matters. If asked for an interpretation choose between the two, refer it either to David or to the Messiah, as I have explained". Two obvious points arise out of this anti-Christian comment. The first is that Qimḥi takes not only the text of the psalm, but also the Christian interpretation literally. On this basis, his rejoinder is logically sound. The second point is that style and expression leave no doubt that Christians tried to convince Jews of the truth of the Christian exposition and that Qimḥi was con-

<sup>33</sup> Cf. SCHILLER-SZINESSY, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 f. The same argument is used by Qimḥi in his comment on Ps. xlv.



cerned to provide his generation with a rationally convincing answer. In other words, this was by no means a merely academic exercise between the learned on both sides. Similarly, Qimḥi's comment on *Ps. vii: 8*<sup>34</sup> contains this "answer": "the Christians mistakenly interpret this verse (as applying) to Jesus and refer *wa'adhath le'ummim* to the nations who have turned to his faith. . ."

*Ps. xv*, Commenting on *v. 5* Qimḥi continues: "I have enlarged on this point for you so that you can find an answer in it to the Christians, who say that David did not discriminate between an Israelite and a Gentile, but that all interest was forbidden.<sup>35</sup> This is not possible (or, not right) for David did not forbid what Moses our Teacher permitted by the command of God. In fact, the *Torah* says: *you shall not add to it* [*sc. the commandments*] *nor take away from it* (*Deut. iv: 2*)".

In his comment on *Ps. xix: 10* Qimḥi objects to the Christians "who hold that the *Torah* which was given on Mount Sinai had a limited duration, namely until the time of Jesus' coming only. Until his time it was in the flesh, *corporeally* (*gufanith*), but when he came he commanded to understand it in the spirit, *spiritually* (*ruhanith*). But their words are words of wind and vanity. For those commandments which in their view are allegorical and cannot be understood in their literal meaning [have in point of fact] been clearly revealed by God and not in an allegory (*mashal*). Therefore, the other commandments also must be understood by man according to their literal meaning, not as an allegory. For if the commandments were allegorical men would be in doubt. One would say the hidden thing is such and such, and another such and such, but Scripture says explicitly . . ."<sup>36</sup> Qimḥi expresses here lucidly what was the generally accepted and defended Jewish position with regard to the permanent validity of the *Torah* of Moses.

Qimḥi applies *Ps. xxi* either to David or to King Messiah of the future; the Christians to Jesus.<sup>37</sup> "But (writes Qimḥi) you shall

<sup>34</sup> Cf. SCHILLER-SZINESSY, p. 23. This passage is not contained in the separate *Answers*.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 41 and the note on *כל רבית אסור*. This was a favourite Christian objection, as we know from many Jewish *answers*.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 58 f. Qimḥi ends his rejoinder with *Deut. xxx: 11-14*. Cf. also the quotation in n. 13, above.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 62 f.

answer them verse by verse. All his words are dependent on others.<sup>38</sup> Take for example the phrase *Oh Lord in thy strength the king rejoices*, indeed, for without the power of he father the son will have none. But if he is weak then he is not God . . . *He asked life from you*: this cannot refer to his humanity for he did not live long; if [it refers] to his divinity what has He given him which he has not already had? Or, *great is his glory through your salvation*: but without your salvation his glory is not great. Hence is not God. *For the king trusts in the Lord*, if this refers to his divinity, there is no need for him to trust in another and he has no need of the grace of the Most High . . ." We have here a combination of *peshat* with logic and an appeal to history. This kind of argument no doubt appealed more to Jews than it convinced Christians.

To Ps. xlv.<sup>39</sup> "The Christians apply this psalm to Jesus the Nazarene. *The daughters of kings* are interpreted allegorically as meaning the nations which have turned to the religion of the Christians." Qimḥi again proceeds verse by verse in order to demolish the Christian argument. He points to the impossibility of applying to God companions, or a tri-unity. He rejects the Christian interpretation of *shegal* (v. 10) as entirely inappropriate to God,<sup>40</sup> and polemizes against their exposition of v. 17 as being equally inapplicable to an incorporeal, transcendent deity.<sup>41</sup> His method is again to employ the logic of common sense, and, by his use of the same weapons, to prove that even on the Christians' own premises their interpretation is inadmissible because it would be incompatible with the Jewish concept of God.

Again in his anti-Christian polemic in connection with their interpretation of Ps. lxxii he denies that it can be applied to Jesus. How urgent it was to refute the Christian claim emerges from his use of such terms as "you must shatter their words in front of

<sup>38</sup> Genebrardus translates "Haec enim verba omnia sunt hominis ab alio pendentis" which makes better sense, but is difficult to get out of the Hebrew text: כל דבריו הם תלויים באחרים.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. ESTERSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 333 f.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 334: ולא יאמר לו נצבה שגל לימניך אפילו דרך משל כי שגל: 334: היא כמו שפירשנו לשון משכבי אשה ולא יתכן זה על אלוה.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *ibid.*: ועוד איך יאמר תחת אבותיך יהיו בניך ואם יאמר לך יש: לאלוה בנים והם המאמינים בו כמו בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם [דברים ידא], אמור לו אם יש לו בנים אין לו אבות. ואם יאמר האב כמו שהם אומרים אב ובן ורוח הקדש כבר השיבנו על זה, במזמור למה רגשו גוים [בא']. ועוד תשובה אחרת אם יאמר אב אפילו לדבריהם לא יתכן לומר אבות בלשון רבים.

them and reply: 'you say that in this verse is contained the trinity of God, the king, and the son of the king. But as you identify Jesus with Solomon there are actually four'." He then proceeds to examine the Christian claim under the aspect of the dual nature of Jesus as God and as man, and finds the claim absurd on both counts. What follows in the psalm can on no account refer to Jesus, for there was no peace in his time, and after him the wicked and sinners increased even more. Neither did Jesus rule from sea to sea, nor did all peoples worship him.<sup>42</sup>

To Ps. lxxxvii. "The Christians explain this psalm concerning Jesus (a variant reading is "their faith") and say: '*his foundation* that is Jesus. In Zion Jesus was formed and born; . . . the man born there is the most high, and God is the Most High. *Glorious things are announced of you*: why? because you are the city of God in which he will be born'. You must answer them: 'first of all, how does it say *his foundation*, with the personal suffix *o*, when he has so far not been mentioned in the verse?' Next, if they construe *the most high* of the one born and refer *and he* to the man born who was mentioned, then you must object to them: 'indeed the verse speaks of 'man' and 'man' points to many men, yet he was only one. The psalm also says *and he will establish her*; what is it that he established? Jesus in Jerusalem? They will then answer you: 'it does not speak of wood and stone, but he came to establish Zion and Jerusalem in the spirit, that is, the faith through which they who believe in him are saved from that day onwards.' But you must object to them: 'how can this be understood now materially, now spiritually? . . . Further, the cities mentioned are (to be understood) materially, not spiritually . . . Finally, it says of these cities, *this man will be born there*. If this be so, do you say that in every one of these cities there was born one God?'<sup>43</sup>

To Ps. cx.<sup>44</sup> "The Christians apply this psalm to Jesus. In the first verse they read '*adhonay la'dhonay*, pointing the *nun* with

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 442 f. The use of the term כסילות reflects Christian objections to Jewish exegesis, only in reverse. Qimhi again points out that neither Jews nor Muslims worship Jesus; they deny him. He shows a good knowledge of Christian claims and arguments, e.g. the Christians claim that Jesus continually prays for himself. The Jews say this would be absurd if he were God. The Christians then meet this objection by saying that Jesus prays for all who believe in him. He refutes this by asking why he should pray if, as the son of God, he is God.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. נצחון, ed. Hackspar (cf. note 2), p. 199

<sup>44</sup> Cf. BOSNIAK, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 66 ff. (Hackspar, p. 200).



*gameš*, and say it means two, *i.e.* father and son, and the spirit is the third. Another error is that they read (v. 3 *'immekha* for *'ammekha*, and refer *godhesh* to Jesus, born from the womb. Answer them that Jerome, their translator, made a mistake, for *la'dhoni* is written with the *nun* pointed *hireq*, and is said of David. All the books from east to west have *nun hireq* and likewise *'ammekha* with *pathah* to the *'ayin*. Do they not say that our *Torah* is a witness for them? Answer their error of belief in this way: 'if both father and son are divine, then the one does not need his companion, for he who is in need of somebody else is not called God' . . ." Qimḥi then deals in similar vein with the other identifications — erroneous, as he holds, — with Jesus, and ends up by denying the Christian claim that the *Torah* was of limited duration. This he refutes, and this time he quotes as proof *Malachi* "the seal of the prophets"<sup>45</sup>: *remember the law of Moses my servant* (iii: 22), and *I will send you Elijah the prophet . . .* (v. 23). He asserts that the *Torah* was commanded to Moses on Sinai, not to Jesus. "From this you can see that the *Torah* from Sinai will never be changed, but as it was given to our Teacher Moses so it will remain for ever. Elijah has not yet come and will not come until the time of the Messiah". Then he returns to the attack: v. 5, *he shall shatter kings in the day of his wrath*: where are the wars which Jesus has waged, and where the kings whom he has vanquished?" . . ." v. 7 says: *he shall lift up the head*, but unto this day he has not lifted up his head". The right interpretation requires reference of this psalm to David, *'al derekh ha-peshaṭ*. Here again, he combines the *peshaṭ*, buttressed by a grammatical analysis, with an appeal to history.

Further illustrations could be given from *Ps. cxix: 129*. Qimḥi rejects the Christian claim that the *Torah* is a *marshal* and has a fixed time of validity.<sup>46</sup> Further, on *Ps. cxxvi: 5* he compares the *Torah* to a seed of blessing<sup>47</sup>, and again on *cxix: 8*.<sup>48</sup> In both cases

<sup>45</sup> Cf. BOSNIAK, חותם; other MSS read סוף or אחרון.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 141 f. and on v. 152 p. 147. Cf. also his comment on *Ps. xix*, above, and n. 37. On v. 160 (cf. *ibid.*, p. 149) he again stresses the eternal validity of the *mišwoth*: אף להם זמן [זמן קצוב v. 152] כמו שאומרים הנוצרים . . . התועים

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 165, הוורעים בדמעה refers to the keeping of the *Torah* in Exile, and the harvest will be הגמול הטוב for which the Jews hope. See also his comment on vv. 4 and 6.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 174. By implication the Christians are meant by הגרים: כן יהיו הגרים כי כל תורתם ואמונתם הבל וריק כחציר גזת וכן יבלו כחציר גזת אבל תורת ישראל המשיל לורע ברכה.

he seemingly permits himself an allegorical explanation, clearly overstepping the boundary between allegory and metaphorical comparison which he is generally very careful to observe throughout his commentaries. His deep concern for the permanent validity of the *Torah* as the possession and obligation of Israel may account for his apparent departure in the two instances just quoted. They seem to be isolated cases; they are certainly different from the examples cited in connection with his interpretation of *Pss.* ii, lxxii and lxxxvii together with his censure of the Christian method adopted in cx, partly literal, partly spiritual. For he is at pains to show that the method of *peshat* is the only correct one and that the Christian resort to a spiritual, allegorizing and typological interpretation is contrary to the text and meaning of Scripture. This opposition which he shares with the other Jewish exegetes, is, indeed, fundamental to the Jewish position; it cuts at the very root of Christian Biblical exegesis and shows clearly how incompatible the two methods are. To depart from the *peshat* as one absolutely essential method of interpretation opened the door wide to sectarian and heretical tendencies with their inherent danger of antinomianism. The religious philosophers and the Qabbalists were therefore careful not only to conform in their own lives to the *Halakhah*, but (at least the majority of them) also to refrain from a philosophical or mystical interpretation of the preceptive part of the *Torah*, notwithstanding their attempt at unravelling the *mysteries of the commandments* metaphysically or mystically. If we apply this to Qimḥi's metaphorical interpretation of *ben* in *Ps.* ii and relate it to his inevitable adherence to anti-anthropomorphism we realize that he was bound to uphold the immaterial, incorporeal nature of God. Significantly he has recourse to *mashal*, metaphorical interpretation in the strict sense of using a comparison, on the principle of *dibberah Torah ki-lešon beney 'adham*, but not to [*derekh*] *ruḥanith*, the spiritual *Umdeutung*. It is true that the frontier between metaphorical and spiritual, *i.e.* typological, allegorical, mystical, exposition is not always clearly marked, but it is a legitimate distinction and one which is borne out if we compare the Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Bible.

The anti-Christian polemic must not be considered in isolation; it is, as has been claimed, an integral part of the medieval Jewish explanation of the Bible as a whole. We must, therefore, not assume

that the collection of Qimhi's anti-Christian remarks on certain psalms into a separate treatise is in itself an indication of such isolation. The collection was made for practical purposes. We must equally take account of his systematically pursued messianic and eschatological interpretation as a necessary complement. There is his vindication of the future redemption of Israel, his reference, whenever feasible, to the end-time, the time of salvation for Israel and of what is left of the other nations, after the war of Gog and Magog.<sup>49</sup>

The whole body of medieval exegesis is an eloquent witness to the relentless struggle between a powerful Church and a Jewry at bay. Inasmuch as it is part of a comprehensive whole, the spirited defence of Judaism made possible by the skilful application of the method of *peshat*, helped to strengthen the Jews in their faith and practice and enriched the understanding and appreciation of the biblical heritage. If we grasp this simple but fundamental fact everything falls into place: the fervent belief in the coming of the promised Messiah and in final redemption and salvation; the eternal validity of the *Torah*, which was neither abrogated by Jesus nor will it be set aside when the Messiah, heralded by Elijah will come. Both beliefs receive sanction from the unflinching faith in the simple, absolute unity and uniqueness of God.

There is no need to defend, still less to apologise for the language in which this polemic was couched. There is no pulling of punches, but at least there is no abuse. These commentators were as much the children of their own age as were their Christian opponents, and we must understand them in the context of contemporary society. Their work reflects the spiritual climate of the Middle Ages, when theological preoccupations dominated the lives of Jews and Christians alike. They coloured social and economic thought no less than political action. Biblical exegesis, both Jewish and Christian, mirrors the life and thought of two faiths locked in battle, one on the offensive, aggressive, demanding, the other on the defensive, suffering from discrimination and sometimes outright persecution. Neither was willing to depart from their respective theological positions. The anti-Christian polemic contained in the *corpus* of Jewish biblical exegesis is a witness to the relevance, and the topical urgency of the problems discussed. Appeal to the literal, plain meaning of the Bible and to reason

<sup>49</sup> See the passages enumerated in n. 15, above.



and history resulted in the Jews standing firm, with few, but notable exceptions, and in their holding their own. And despite official hostility, there was much personal contact between Jewish and Christian scholars, in a sincere desire to discover the truth of the Hebrew Bible for both of them, as being the word of God, Holy Writ.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Paper read at the Institute of Jewish Studies, then at Manchester, in January 1959.



## *Via passiva in early Hasidism*

THAT the human soul must conduct itself in a mode of passive receptivity whilst God takes the active part is said to be one of the fundamental principles of mysticism. Indeed, it is claimed that this particular quality of consciousness is a permanent postulate of all mystical experience. One of the most prominent students of mediaeval mysticism wrote: "Mystiker wollen reines Passivum sein."<sup>1</sup>

This point, the mystic's craving for quietude and passivity, seems to be one of those rare instances where there is general agreement between the theologian of mysticism and the student of the history of religion. Just as speculative mysticism is nearly always associated with pantheistic leanings<sup>2</sup>, so one is justified in considering practice and teaching as to the passivity of the soul to be another, hardly less characteristic mark of religious experience of the mystical type: the requirement of passiveness is as closely connected with mysticism at the practical level as is pantheism on the theoretical plane. Statements of passivity are made both in the works of formal theologians of mysticism and in the description of historians and phenomenologists.

One will find in the literature of the mystics ardent recommendations of complete passivity. All mystical writers use a common language in regard to the question of passiveness and appear, in this respect, to live in the same spiritual climate.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Miss Underhill echoed the great chorus of mystics, theologians and historians of religion when she wrote (in her eloquent book *Practical Mysticism*) about passivity as follows:

"This unmistakable experience has been achieved by the mystics of every religion, and when we read their statements, we know that all are speaking of the same thing . . . they are the passive objects upon which *it* works".<sup>4</sup>

This being so the basic texts of early Hasidism, and in particular the texts of the Great Maggid, will now be examined, in an endea-

<sup>1</sup> JOSEPH BERNHARD, *Zur Soziologie der Mystik*, *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, 1928, 1. Heft, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Bibliographical references on this point would run into legion; I note here only W. R. INGE, *Christian Mysticism*, London, 1912, pp. 117-22.

<sup>3</sup> W. R. INGE, *Mysticism in Religion*, London, s.a. p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Practical Mysticism*, London and Toronto, 1914, pp. 133-134, see also pp. 128-130.



vour to determine to what extent they conform to the pattern described above.

The claim is that passivity is conducive to ecstasy, and indeed instrumental in attaining it; and it is this that I shall attempt to trace in the literature of early Hasidism. If the mystical spirit be present in that literature, as I believe it to be in abundance, Hasidism will show affinities to all other mystical trends and the aspect of passivity will not be lacking.

In this study of the passive conduct of the early hasidic mystic I shall not be able to lean to any extent on the work of students of Hasidism; this particular aspect has not, so far, been accorded any attention at all. On the contrary, the very possibility that an attitude of mystical passivity might have existed in Hasidism has been denied by such a distinguished writer as Martin Buber, when contrasting Hasidism with the phenomena of mediaeval German mysticism.<sup>5</sup>

I shall now attempt to show that this view is open to question and that in fact the opposite may be confidently affirmed. The whole impulse towards mystical self-negation as expressed in mediaeval German mysticism finds its closest parallel in Hasidism. Of course there is no suggestion of any literary dependence on the grounds that the Great Maggid might somehow or other have known the works of Eckhardt; the intention is rather to indicate that early Hasidic mystics give expression to the same type of religious experience.

Whereas students of early Hasidism have, surprisingly, overlooked this fascinating aspect of Hasidic piety<sup>6</sup>, a contemporary source of no scholarly pretensions, the *Autobiography* of

<sup>5</sup> "Sein (sc. des Chassidismus) Kern ist eine höchst gotterfüllte und höchst realistische Anleitung zur Ekstase als zu dem Gipfel des Daseins. Aber die Ekstase ist hier nicht, wie etwa bei der deutschen Mystik, ein 'Entwerden'; nicht die sich beschränkende und entäussernde sondern die sich vollendende Seele mündet ins Unbedingte". (*Die jüdische Mystik*, in *Die Chassidischen Bücher*, p. 14). Perhaps it is unfair to Buber to quote such an early formulation of his (written originally in 1906 in the introduction to his German translation of Rabbi Nahman's parables). The formal distinction between the two types of ecstasy is certainly legitimate cf. e.g. the very same distinction between Plotinus and Philo: "The Plotinian ecstasy, unlike the Philonic ... is presented less as the abnegation of the self-hood than as the supreme self-realization", E. R. DODDS, *Parmenides and the Neoplatonic "One"*, *The Classical Quarterly*, xxii, 1928, p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> A short analysis of it was given in my article *R. Abraham Kalisker's concept of Communion*, *JJS*, vi, 1955, pp. 88-89.

Solomon Maimon, included it in a particularly vivid description of the state of Hasidism and its essential tenets at the time of the Great Maggid. As far as I am aware Maimon, writing in 1792, remains the only person who has drawn attention to the part played by the tenet of passivity in the mystical teaching of early Hasidism and in its way of life, and who emphasised its pivotal importance. In describing his visit to the court of R. Dov Baer in Mezritch he writes:

"I observed that their ingenious exegesis (sc. that of the Hasidim) ... was limited strictly to their own extravagant principles, such as the doctrine of self-annihilation."<sup>7</sup>

This seems to mean that in Maimon's view, a considerable part of the talk in the Maggid's circle revolved around the "extravagant principle" of mystical self-annihilation. Indeed, one of the three homilies which Maimon heard from the Maggid and which he noted down in his *Autobiography*, is concerned with this very *motif*—a clear indication of the importance which Maimon felt that the Maggid attributed to this facet of his teaching. Perhaps it is not surprising that the doctrine of passive bearing impressed itself on Maimon as so vital an element in Hasidism. His insight into this aspect was all the more sharply focussed because of his own position in the intellectual world of his time. Maimon belonged to the philosophical school of German Idealism, the development of which he helped to further towards Fichte and Schelling. It was this philosophical movement which was to discover in mediaeval German Mysticism a fertile and positive spiritual force.<sup>8</sup> Maimon's vision is perhaps on this account too sharply accentuated, but it is by no means misconceived. My aim here is

<sup>7</sup> *Solomon Maimons Lebensgeschichte*, herausgegeben von Dr. JAKOB FROMER, Munich, 1911, p. 204. An English translation by J. Clark Murray was published in 1888 (new edition 1944) p. 169.

<sup>8</sup> The link between the philosophy of German idealism and the German mysticism of the Middle Ages is well-known. For a great mass of detail, including the question of self-annihilation, see the bulky albeit shallow study by E. VON BRACKEN, *Meister Eckhart und Fichte*, Würzburg, 1943. On the question of self-annihilation in the philosophy of idealism cf. Fichte's memorable words in his short mystical treatise *Anweisung zum seligen Leben*, (ed. MEDICUS, Leipzig, 1910, p. 128) "Solange der Mensch noch irgend etwas selbst zu sein begehrt, kommt Gott nicht zu ihm, denn kein Mensch kann Gott werden. Sobald er sich aber rein, ganz und bis in die Wurzel vernichtet, bleibt allein Gott übrig, und ist alles im allem. Der Mensch kann sich keinen Gott erzeugen; aber sich selbst, als die eigentliche Negation, kann er vernichten, und sodann versinket er in Gott."

to follow up the line of investigation first pointed out by Maimon.

## I

The reason why I begin by analysing the recommendation of passivity proclaimed by the Maggid Baer of Mezritch<sup>9</sup> as quoted in Maimon's autobiography, in spite of its being but a secondary source, is that this particular formulation of the homily is an obvious starting point for discussion because of its extreme brevity and pregnancy:

"*'When the minstrel played, the spirit of God came upon him'* (2 Kings iii: 15). This is explained in the following way. As long as a man is self-active, he is incapable of receiving the influence of the Holy Ghost; for this purpose he must hold himself like an instrument in a purely passive state. The meaning of the passage is therefore this. When the minstrel (*ha-menaggen*, the servant of God), becomes like his instrument (*ke-naggen*), then the Spirit of God comes upon him.<sup>10</sup>"

In this hasidic *locus classicus* of the doctrine of mystical passivity, the Maggid's comparison of a man to a musical instrument on which the spirit of God plays happens to be one of the great

<sup>9</sup> The identity of the *Saddiq* called by Maimon "B. from M." is obvious.

<sup>10</sup> *Lebensgeschichte*, p. 200; *Autobiography*, p. 166. A but slightly different rendering of this homily is to be found in the book *Tifereth 'Uzzi'el* by R. Uziel Meisels, a disciple of the Maggid, who reformulated the originally mystical wording of the Maggid in a rather ethical than mystical tone. "What I have also heard from my teacher and Master Dov Baer . . . on the verse *and it was when the minstrel played that the spirit of God came upon him*, it is apparent to anyone that one who plays well upon an instrument has ulterior motives (*peniyyoth*) and his chief object is pride in his own voice. This is not so of the instrument whereon he plays. For it is inanimate and certainly lacks any ability to have ulterior motives. And this is the meaning of the verse *and it was when the minstrel played*, i.e. if the minstrel, that is to say the human being, is as that which is played,—in other words if he is like the instrument on which music is produced, so that he too has no ulterior motives, like an instrument which has none either—then the spirit of God will come upon him." (*Tifereth Uzzi'el*, Warsaw 1862, p. 39b). This formulation of the teaching expresses the idea of passive conduct with emphasis upon humility (cf. my note on the two variants, *A hasidic homily by the Maggid of Mezritch* (Hebrew), *Zion*, vol. xii, p. 97). The self-annihilation counselled in R. Uzziel's version is in fact the annihilation of individual pride, a feature with which we cannot deal fully in this paper. R. Ephraim of Sudylkow, a grandson of the Baalshem, adopts the above-cited verse and also its exegesis, in incidental fashion and without mentioning the Maggid's name as his authority; but it is perfectly obvious that he quotes the same tradition. Cf. his *Degel Ma'aneh 'Efrayim*, Korzec, 1810, p. 99a, in the homily for *Shabbath Teshuvah*.



motifs on the subject of ecstatic passiveness.<sup>11</sup> It is to this numerous group of expressions that the saying of the Maggid clearly belongs in his assertion of the instrumental passivity of the mystic.

The *shofar* is referred to in early hasidic literature as the favourite variation for the harp in the previous image. The Maggid himself made use of it:

"Let him consider (*yahshov*) that the 'World of Speech' (*'Olam ha-Dibbur*) speaks within him and that without it speech would be impossible, as it is written '*O Lord, open thou my lips*' (*Ps. li: 17*) . . . so that he is merely like a *shofar*, for it produces merely the sound that is blown into it; and if he who blows departs from it, then it can produce no sound. Similarly in His absence, blessed be He, one is not able either to speak or think."<sup>12</sup>

Man's speech and thought come from God; but man's action is here quite deliberately excluded from the sphere of God's activity. Every student is aware of the trilogy 'Thought, Speech and Action'<sup>13</sup> found in abundance in cabbalistic and hasidic literature. The meticulous avoidance by the Great Maggid of the obvious third member of the phrase, 'action', in the above-cited passage (and in all parallel passages) cannot be fortuitous. The Maggid clearly excluded 'action' from the sphere of human passivity. It was probably on dogmatic grounds that he refused to attribute man's actions to Divine activity<sup>14</sup>.

R. Hayyim Haika of Amdura, another disciple of the Great Maggid, repeats the trope of the *shophar* of Dov Baer though without acknowledgement. But the combination of motifs leaves no shadow of doubt that he is expounding the doctrine of his teacher, the Great Maggid:

"Like the *shofar* raise up thy voice (*Is. lviii: 1*), that is to say: just as the sound of the *shofar* issues from the person who blows

<sup>11</sup> In European tradition this kind of image is as early as the fifth oracle of Montanus who compared man in ecstasy to a harp upon which the divinity plays; cf. P. DE LABRIOLLE, *La Crise Montaniste*, Paris, 1913, p. 45. This author collected in a footnote all the parallels on the theme of 'instrumental' human passivity which he has succeeded in finding. But there is much material that might be added. On further parallels in mediaeval mysticism, see e.g. the posthumous work of H. S. DENIFLE, *Die Deutschen Mystiker des 14-ten Jahrhunderts*, Freiburg in der Schweiz, 1951, pp. 98, 163.

<sup>12</sup> *'Or ha-'emeth*, 1900, p. 3b.

<sup>13</sup> *מחשבה דיבור ומעשה*

<sup>14</sup> On this point see *infra*.

it and not from the *shofar* itself, so man should see to it that the speech that issues from him is no more than the sound of the *shofar*, and that it is of the Holy One, blessed be He.<sup>15</sup>

The *shofar*-motif must have had a strong appeal in hasidic circles since its diffusion was considerable and we find it, with many variations, throughout early Hasidic literature. It appears in the body of teaching of R. 'Elimelekh of Lizensk, a disciple of the Great Maggid. R. Kalonymos Kalman of Cracow, a disciple of R. 'Elimelekh, testifies to having heard the *shofar* allegory from his master:

"As I have heard from my master, teacher and Rabbi, the man of God our sainted Rabbi 'Elimelekh, on the verse *Raise up thy voice like the Shofar*—his explanation being that just as the Shofar does not exult in the sound that comes from it, if it should be fair and pleasant, so the expositor and he who raises his voice to preach chastisement and ethics does not at all exult" (*sc.* in his eloquence.)<sup>16</sup>

It is clear that the essential theme here is that of the Maggid spun out, however, into this somewhat complex formula. The passivity spoken of here is not of the pure instrumental type, but has the habitual moralistic tone of admonition against pride; and this application of the theme is indeed to be found in the formulations of the Great Maggid himself. A decisive difference represented by the above passage lies in the fact that the homily here does not presuppose a contemplating or a praying *Hasid*, but a preaching *Saddiq* or admonishing *mokhiah*. This aspect of the doctrine of the instrumental passivity will interest us later on.

R. Abraham Hayyim of Zloczow, a pupil of the Great Maggid, quotes the simile in the name of his teacher; but he introduces it in a somewhat radicalised form, which aims at including within the realm of instrumental passivity more than the relatively harmless sphere of speech and thought:

"I have heard in the name of the Rabbi, that holy light, our teacher Dov Baer, may his memory be for an eternal blessing, the interpretation of the verse *And like the shofar raise up thy voice*: that is to say, man must consider himself as nothing (*lahashov 'eth 'ashmo ke-'ayin*), as having no merit or good deed,

<sup>15</sup> *Hayyim wa-hesed*, Warsaw, 1891, p. 34 a.

<sup>16</sup> *Ma'or wa-shemesh*, ed. 1942, part i, p. 44a.

and even if he performs *mišwoth* and good deeds it is not he who performs them, but he does them through the power of God, and by virtue of the intelligence, the love, and the goodness, which He has graciously bestowed upon him . . . . And likewise in his prayer let him consider that the 'World of Speech' ('*Olam ha-Dibbur*) speaks within him, and that his thought is the 'World of Thought' ('*Olam ha-maḥashavah*), and that he is like a *shofar* which has within it no sound but only that which is blown into it. And this is the meaning of that text of Scripture like the *shofar* raise up thy voice.<sup>17</sup>

All essential features of the *shofar*-motif are here assembled. Closer examination of the passage, comparing it with the *shofar*-passages of the Maggid, makes it patent that R. Abraham Hayyim slightly overstated his teacher's tradition in the direction of his own radical views. It was rather his own than the Great Maggid's view that God and not man is responsible for all meritorious human actions.<sup>18</sup> An important ramification of the doctrine of instrumental

<sup>17</sup> '*Orah le-hayyim*, (s.a.s.l. Lemberg?) 5th part, p. 26b.

<sup>18</sup> Very occasionally the Maggid too, although in principle excluding action from the realm of direct Divine instigation, would state that נמצא כי הכל הוא ממך ומשלך פעלונך ('*Or Torah*, Korzec, 1804, in the section on *Psalms* without pagination, [p. 94a-b]) but unlike in the teaching of R. Abraham Hayyim no further theological conclusions are drawn from this, except that in spite of this God takes pride in man (ibid.) ואתה מתפאר בנו כאילו עשינו הדבר מעוצם ידינו. By implication this must mean meritorious deeds only, and not all actions indiscriminately. There are hardly any instances to be found in hasidic literature in which God is made responsible or co-responsible, on account of His exclusive activity, for human sins. Perhaps in popular Hasidism with its sub-literary and oral forms of transmission (as to the existence of which cf. my remarks in *JJS*, ix, 1958, p. 184, note 43e) which made possible the maintenance of unusually radical and enthusiastic views, the co-responsibility of God with man in man's sinful acts was entertained. A vague statement to this effect by R. Phineas of Korzec is briefly recorded in *Hayyey Moharan*, Jerusalem, 1947, *Hashmaṭoth* added at the end of the volume, § 3. It may be symptomatic, however, that the particular saying does not occur in any of the various collections of R. Phineas' *dicta* or in the rich material contained in A. HESCHEL's article on R. Phineas in '*Aley 'Ayin*, Jubilee Volume in the honour of S. Z. SCHOCKEN, 1947-52, pp. 213-244. Of course his historical relationship to Israel Baalshem is in need of clarification. One wonders whether he was a disciple of Israel Baalshem, as later Hasidism described him or rather a colleague of his. Phineas visited Israel Baalshem once or twice (cf. A. Heschel, p. 218) but his teaching does not seem to be derived from Israel Baalshem. He appears rather to be one of a number of exponents of a wild popular pantheism current in the Ukraine. Among these comparatively illiterate or semi-literate charismatics Israel Baalshem was not necessarily chronologically the first though clearly the most successful. To understand the figure of Israel Baalshem in the context of a group of itinerant enthusiasts of popular pantheism is one of the urgent asks of historical research.



passivity is the idea of R. Abraham Hayyim that the principle, if applied to the work of *mišwoth*, would exclude the possibility of free will and would open up problems in connection with the doctrine of divine reward which must be firmly based on the assumption of the autonomy of the human action. Consistent in his denial of human activity R. Abraham Hayyim allocates divine reward as an act of grace for man's meritorious will only—which is free—but not for man's actions which are, in his view, carried out if not by God, at least by Divine power.<sup>19</sup> These ramifications of the problem definitely lie outside the Great Maggid's religious orbit and belong to the subsequent development within hasidic thought of the Maggid's thesis on human passivity.

But harp and *shofar* are not the only symbols in the Maggid's teaching on mystical passiveness. He reiterates his doctrine untiringly, in a variety of images:

"Let him consider himself as nought, for he is only like an organ (*magrefah*) made of leather in which there are holes, and it is through these holes that the instrument produces its music; and should the leather vessel pride itself that melody proceeds from it? So also the human being. 'Thought' and 'Speech' and all qualities dwell in him as in an instrument (*keli*). And wherefore should he exult? Is he not in himself nothing? . . ."<sup>20</sup>

This wording is once again couched in the form of an hortatory expression of the instrumental doctrine: against pride. But a parallel passage shows the Maggid expounding the pure instrumentality of the mystic in his non-separate state from God:

"Let one consider that one is merely as a craftsman's tool. Just as a craftsman beats the hammer upon the stone at his own desire and not by the desire of the hammer which actually strikes the stone: for were that so, the hammer would be separate from the man who wields it. Thus it is just like the *Qadmuth*

<sup>19</sup> cf. 'Orah le-hayyim, part ii, p. 34b:

ידוע בכל העבודות שאין אדם עושה כלום ... ונמצא שהשי"ת הוא העובד והגומר כל מעשה העבודות ועשיית המצות ובחסדו ית' נותן שכר לאדם על רצונו וחפצו לעשות המצות כאילו הוא הגומר ועושה ולך ה' החסד כי אתה תשלם לאיש כמעשהו כלומר כאילו עשה בעצמו.

<sup>20</sup> 'Or ha-emeth, 1900, p. 8a, in משל לפני התקיעות i.e. in the context the passage is connected with the *shofar* and has to be considered as a variation on the *shofar*-motif. On the organ (*magrefah*) cf. T.B. 'Arakhin 10b.

*ha-Sekhel*<sup>21</sup> which emanates to *Binah*. And all one's limbs are but vessels . . . ."<sup>22</sup>

*Shofar*, harp, hammer, and craftsman's tool—these are the great images of the instrumental doctrine representing the fundamental feature of mystical passivity.

## II

We have seen that there is a tendency in the mystic to feel that in all that he does he is the object rather than the subject of his action, in other words that he feels himself placed in a state of utter passivity. From this he will draw the conclusion that, in whatever he does, the mystic's own doing is unreal or fictitious in view of the all-inclusive activity of the Divine.

Israel Baalshem—though not in connection with the practice of instrumental passivity or self-annihilation, which play no part in his religious world—did entertain such ideas, in a manner which has no air of caution or reticence about it. His disciple R. Jacob Joseph writes in the name of Israel Baalshem:

"while one is engaged in *Torah* and *mišwoth* one should not think in one's heart that he himself is doing it, but that the *Shekhinah* is doing it."<sup>23</sup>

And in a more elaborate form, the same teaching of Israel Baalshem is attested by the same disciple:

"I have heard from my master that he who did a great *mišwah* or learned much *Torah* or prayed with devotion, (such a man) must not induce any pride into his heart that he has done all that. But *Malkhuth* which is called 'I' has done that."<sup>24</sup>

It should be borne in mind, of course, that Israel Baalshem was not interested mainly in the pure metaphysical form of the principle that God and not man is agent in human actions, but rather in its

<sup>21</sup> On *Qadmuth ha-Sekhel* cf. G. SCHOLEM, *Ha-Bilti muda' u-musag qadmuth ha-Sekhel ba-Sifruth ha-hasiduth, Haguth*, 1944, p. 145 ff.

<sup>22</sup> 'Or ha-'emeth, 1900, p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> *Sofenath Pa'aneah*, 1782 p. 16b.

<sup>24</sup> *Ben Porath Yosef*, 1781, p. 60a. This passage is identical in content with the previous one. *Malkhuth* is nothing but the tenth *Sefirah* which has several names in cabbalistic literature. The most usual among them are *Shekhinah* and *Malkhuth*. Likewise 'Ani, the Divine I, is one of the names of the last *Sefirah*. An almost identical formulation, also in the name of Israel Baalshem, is to be found in the same author's *Toledoth Ya'aqov Yosef*, 1780, p. 143b.

practical, i.e. moralistic, application. The above formulation is intended as an admonition to humility—a basic quality of the mystic which may or may not reveal a mystical-passive aspect. Israel Baalshem's exhortation could be summed up like this: 'Do not be proud of your religious achievements, since you do not play an active part in the fulfilment of your religious duties. The active part is played by God.' As the teaching stands it amounts mainly to a warning against every kind of religious self-confidence or self-complacency; but it also implies a wider religious principle, that of the exclusive Divine activity in all religious actions of man.

More reluctance and above all, more caution can be observed on this particular point in the atmosphere surrounding the Great Maggid<sup>25</sup>. Solomon Maimon, who knew the teaching of the Great Maggid partly from first-hand knowledge which he acquired during his visit to Mezritch and partly from reliable information given him by the Maggid's disciples, as noted above, is not sufficiently exact on this particular point. Describing the divine service of the *Hasidim*, Maimon writes:

"Their worship<sup>26</sup> consisted in a voluntary elevation above the body, that is, in an abstraction of the thoughts from all created things, even from the individual self, and in union with God. By this means a kind of self-denial arose among them, which led them to ascribe, not to themselves but to God alone, all the actions undertaken in this state.<sup>27</sup>"

As this passage is found in the context of the author's description of hasidic prayer, it would appear that the principle of attributing all actions to divine activity was limited to actions (or gestures?) during ecstatic prayer.

It would seem that the Maggid's doctrine of passivity, in the positive formulation of which God becomes the sole subject of man's activity, is applicable to the time of prayer only and has no general validity in regard to human actions as such. Maimon does not state this explicitly, but it is apparent from the fact that he discusses the doctrine and its practice when describing the prayer-life of the Great Maggid's *Hasidim*. On the mere basis of Maimon's evidence it could hardly be contended that the application of the doctrine went beyond these rather narrow limits.

<sup>25</sup> cf. *supra* p. 141.

<sup>26</sup> In the original German text, *Gottesdienst*.

<sup>27</sup> *Lebensgeschichte* p. 195; *Autobiography* p. 160-161.



Has the internal hasidic literary tradition of the Great Maggid's teaching anything to say regarding the narrower application of this doctrine? There is nothing in hasidic literature written in Hebrew which would contradict this qualified interpretation of the Maggid's teaching and practice as derived from Maimon. The reverse is true: inner hasidic tradition would corroborate this interpretation.

All salient passages of the Great Maggid's authentic teaching would corroborate the narrow interpretation given above, that it is during ecstatic prayer that the divine is supposed to take hold of man and govern his speech. *Ps. li: 17 O Lord, open thou my lips* is referred to repeatedly in the most pertinent passages of the doctrine of passive speech. There can be little doubt that this verse—the opening phrase of the *'Amidah*—indicates the *Sitz im Leben* in which the doctrine of mystical passivity becomes operative:

“... when one commences praying, as soon as one says *O Lord, open thou my lips (Ps. li: 17)*, the *Shekhinah* is enveloped (*mithlabbeseth*) in one and says these words.<sup>28</sup> And when one believes that it is the *Shekhinah* which says it, fear will descend upon one, and the Holy One, blessed be He, will contract himself and will dwell with him.”<sup>29</sup>

A further passage also appears to the *mise-en-scène* of instrumental passivity to the state of ecstatic prayer:

“... since we say *O Lord, open thou my lips*, meaning the *Shekhinah*, that is the ‘World of Speech’. If this is not enveloped (*mithlabbeseth*) in the lip, the lip cannot speak. But the wicked man says *our lips are with us (Ps. xii: 5)*, that is, he speaks by himself... One's speech is from the ‘World of Speech’ and one's thought is from the ‘World of Thought’...”<sup>30</sup>

Another parallel:

“... the *Shekhinah*, as it were (*kiveyakhol*) contracts itself and dwells in the speech as is found in the *Book of Creation*, ‘He fixed them (the letters) in the mouth’, and it is written *O Lord*

<sup>28</sup> I.e. the words of the *'Amidah* prayer.

<sup>29</sup> *Or Torah*, Korzec, 1804, p. (136b) in the section on Aggadoth of the volume which has no pagination. Ed. Zolkiew, 1850, p. 40b.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Korzec (115a), in the section on Selected Verses. Zolkiew, 1850, p. 24b. Also *Or ha-'emeth*, p. 12b.

*open thou my lips* (Ps. li: 17) meaning the *Shekhinah*.<sup>31</sup> If one's evil urge (*yeşer ha-ra'*) entices one, God forbid, (saying) 'How do you know that?' one should answer: 'Did not Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, say 'I am the Lord thy God' (Lev. xviii 2)<sup>32</sup> and certainly it was the Holy One Himself, blessed be He, who said this . . . ."<sup>33</sup>

A third variation on the theme of automatic speech does not quote Ps. li: 17, which constitutes the preamble to the '*Amidah*. Nevertheless, it is an admirable description of the atmosphere of early hasidic prayer-life:

"Sometimes the holy spark of the *Shekhinah* which dwells in one's soul spreads and then She (*i.e.* the *Shekhinah*) actually speaks the words (that come forth) from one's mouth. It seems as if one is not speaking, that the words come forth from one's mouth of their own accord. This is an elevated rank. We can see similar things on the evil side with mad people."<sup>34</sup>

It will be appropriate to mention in this connection that certain apparently radical *dicta* of the Great Maggid Maggid on our subject are, in fact, less radical than their phrasing would lead one to suppose.

"'Your God is a priest':<sup>35</sup> that means, one only worships God, blessed be He, by means of the power which He has given (both) in thought and speech (through) the World of Thought and the World of Speech. Consequently it is because of Him that one worships Him (*me-hamatho* 'ovedim 'otho). What is meant by 'your God is a priest' is that He Himself, as it were, worships Himself (*she-'oved kiveyakhoh* 'eth 'asmo)"<sup>36</sup>.

The use here of the qualifying *kiveyakhoh*, *as it were*, which is a traditional expression to tone down an extravagant statement regarding the Deity, clearly indicates that the pronounced doctrine was considered (either by its author or by the scribe) a daring one;

<sup>31</sup> In cabbalistic nomenclature 'Adonay, Lord, stands for the last *Sefirah*, otherwise termed '*Shekhinah*'.

<sup>32</sup> The whole passage reads as follows: *And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, I am the Lord thy God.* (Lev. xviii: 1-2).

<sup>33</sup> 'Or *ha-'emeth*, p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68b.

<sup>35</sup> T.B. *Sanhedrin*, 39a.

<sup>36</sup> 'Or *Torah*, 1804, p. (132a). Also 'Or *ha-'emeth*, p. 4a.

but there is still no explicit statement that God is active in man's performance of *mišwoth*. I believe that the above passage where 'avodah is described as the activity of God rather than of man, refers to the 'worship' of God in a limited sense, that is to say in prayer<sup>40</sup> and not to worship in general, that is to say, in the performance of *mišwoth*. The passage describing God as a priest worshipping Himself thus would refer but to the prayer-life of the *Hasid*, who is supposed to receive his enthusiastic prayer from God and who in turn offers his *oratio infusa* to God, thereby closing the circle.

### III

Where the fixed Hebrew formula of prayer is concerned it is not difficult to assume that its utterance has been brought about by God, but it is far less easy to assume divine infusion in the case of a sermon delivered in the Yiddish vernacular, where there is no set text to follow. And yet the doctrine of passive speech was applied in early Hasidism also to the *darshan* delivering his *derashah* or *derush*. The requirement of absolute passivity having been extended to this field of speech too the preaching *šaddiq* was expected to break into improvised doggerel when in a quasi-ecstatic state. The speaker must have no power over his diction, which bursts forth from him uncontrolled and impulsive. Thus his speaking is not a voluntary act; rather than being the free architect of his own speech, he feels himself compelled to utter words which are infused into him. His duty is not to preach but rather to withdraw, by mystically annihilating himself, and allow God to make use of his lips. The sermon is thus considered a piece of inspired improvisation. This does not mean vague and inarticulate intuition for which the preacher himself must find words, but rather a precise verbal infusion—it is not merely the theme of his speech of which he is the recipient, but the entire sermon, as it were, *verbatim*. If, consequently, it is not only the general idea of the sermon which is supposed to be inspired, the actual phrases which fall from the lips of the preacher must be considered the *ipsissima verba* of the Divine.

It is by conducting himself with the utmost passivity that the preacher is "carried away" in a radically theological sense, and

<sup>40</sup> In accordance with the talmudic definition of prayer as the 'service of the heart', 'avodah shebba-lev (T.B. *Ta'anith* 2 b).



becomes merely the "instrument" of speech. Powerless, he feels that some divine force speaks through him. Unlike the well-known phenomenon of *glossolalia*, the early hasidic sermon does not consist of short disconnected phrases which subsequently require interpretation. In the early phase of this revivalist movement we have what can be defined as involuntary speech, which differs from *glossolalia* in that it is coherent where the other is incoherent, and in that it is well-developed where the other is fragmentary. The Sabbatian movement exhibited phenomena closer to the *glossolalia* pattern than did the hasidic. It must remain an open question whether there is any historical bridge between the Sabbatian and hasidic forms of involuntary speech.

Incidentally, there is available the testimony of a reliable eye-witness showing how the Great Maggid himself put his ideas on instrumental passivity into practice: R. Ze'ev Wolf one of the highly original disciples of the Great Maggid, writes:

"Once I heard the Maggid of blessed memory state explicitly 'I will teach you the best way of pronouncing Torah, which is as follows—not to be aware of oneself ('eyno *margish 'eth 'asmo*) but as an ear harkening to the way in which the 'World of Speech' speaks within one. It is not he himself who speaks. As soon as he hears his own words, let him stop! ' On many occasions I have seen him (*sc.* the Maggid) with my own eyes, I myself, when he opened his mouth to speak the words of Torah; he appeared to everyone as if he were not in this world at all, but as if the *Shekhinah* were speaking from his throat.<sup>41</sup> And sometimes, even in the middle of a subject or in the middle of . . . a word he would stop and wait for a while.<sup>42</sup>"

The sermon of which the hasidic *ṣaddiq* is the passive agent is improvised, in contradistinction to the carefully prepared discourse

<sup>41</sup> The expression 'the *Shekhinah* speaks from his throat' (*Shekhinah medabbereth mittokh gerono*) is not to be found in the Talmud or Midrash, and it seems to have been coined later, cf. AHARON HYMAN, *ʿOṣar divrey Ḥakhamim*, Tel-Aviv, 1947, p. 524. Already Goldziher, when investigating the Islamic ramifications of the dictum, had to admit regarding the Hebrew formula: "Die Quelle kann ich leider nicht angeben; ebenso wenig ist es mehreren, in den rabbinischen Schriften belesenen Gelehrten gelungen, die Stelle dieses Spruches, dessen Vorhandensein jeder der Befragten zugestand, nachzuweisen" (*Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie*, vol. 1, p. 195).

<sup>42</sup> *ʿOr ha-meir*, Korzec, 1798, part *Rimzey Wayiqra'* p. 2 b. R. Zeev Wolf himself was no advocate of ecstasy and *via passiva* as his voluminous book clearly indicates.

given by the rabbi in a non-hasidic environment. The ideal of utmost spontaneity in delivering sermons is but the natural corollary of the doctrine of passivity. The short units of early hasidic sermon, in contrast to the long and elaborate *derashah* of the traditional Jewish type may be conditioned by the theory and practice of passive speech.<sup>43</sup> The test of whether or not a sermon is dictated from above is its involuntary character. It is this which indicates that its content has not been conceived by the intellect of the preacher but springs from that upper region described as the 'World of Speech' (*'Olam ha-Dibbur*).

Contemporary records on this aspect of hasidic life written by non-hasidic or even anti-hasidic authors, depict scenes which tally well with one another and also with what we know of the doctrine of infused sermon from the Maggid and his disciples.

The dependence of the ideal of the infused sermon on the theory of ultimate passivity in self-annihilation was acutely recognised by Solomon Maimon. In his *Autobiography* he wrote:

"Their sermons and moral teachings were not, as these things commonly are, thought over and arranged in an orderly manner beforehand. This method is proper only to the man who regards himself apart from God. But the superiors of this sect hold that their teachings are divine and therefore infallible only when they are the result of self-annihilation before God, that is, when they are suggested to them *ex tempore*, by the exigence of circumstances, without their contributing anything themselves."<sup>44</sup>

The particular forms of improvisation in preaching become clear from Maimon's description of the general setting of the hasidic sermon. This is delivered on Saturday afternoon at dusk or after nightfall, usually within the framework of the *se'udah shelishith*, the traditional "third meal" of the Sabbath.<sup>45</sup> In order to emphasise the impromptu character of the address the preacher invites the people **present** to provide him with several random verses from sacred texts, biblical or otherwise, and it is of these unrelated threads that the texture of his sermon is woven. He is not unlike the popular magician, who prefers to use articles

<sup>43</sup> The long *derashoth* of R. Jacob Joseph of Polonne are in this respect not representative of the early hasidic sermon; their author is patently no ecstatic.

<sup>44</sup> *Lebensgeschichte* p. 199; *Autobiography*, p. 164.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. my remarks in *JJS*, viii, 1957, pp. 205-209.

preferred him by the audience in order to emphasise the authenticity of his performance:

"... Every newcomer... recited, as he was called, some verse of the Holy Scriptures. Thereupon the superior<sup>46</sup> began to deliver a sermon for which the verses recited served as a text, so that although they were disconnected verses taken from different parts of the Holy Scriptures they were combined with as much skill as if they had formed a single whole.<sup>47</sup>"

The opponents of Hasidism, though inappreciative of the outbursts of these private revelational inundations, described them in a fashion which matches the picture of the *Hasidim* themselves or of Maimon as far as the phenomena are concerned, though not of course their evaluation. In *Sefer Wikkuaḥ* (*The Book of Contention*) by R. Loebel<sup>48</sup> a description is to be found which, while independent of Maimon's, corroborates it.

"... they trod a new path in that at the *se'udah shelishith* the chief of them would pronounce Torah as it came to him (*mah sheyyavo' le-yado*) and anyone [*sic*] on a biblical verse or a midrash about which he was asked. Does not the Zohar proclaim about those who pronounce Torah and are not harnessed to the truth that the Devil goes to meet such (men) and kills them? And so said R. Simeon to the Holy Assembly, 'I pray you, do not say a word which you do not know and have not heard from Big Trees<sup>49</sup>, so that that will not be the cause of death of people'. And they said 'God forbid that we do it'. So far the Zohar.<sup>50</sup> In any case supposing that he does not pose as a prophet and has no Holy Spirit, why should he involve himself<sup>51</sup>... and boast that he is cleaving to God, blessed be He and that He gives him Torah and speaks from his throat. How does one know whether God gives it him? From his teaching it looks as if the thing did not come from God, for their teaching is like the jingle of the jester in which though the ending of the second rhyme is like that of the first nevertheless there is no

<sup>46</sup> In the German original: der hohe Obere, meaning of course the *Ṣaddiq*.

<sup>47</sup> *Lebensgeschichte* p. 203; *Autobiography*, p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> On the man and his polemical writings cf. G. SCHOLEM in *Zion*, xx, 1955, pp. 153-162.

<sup>49</sup> i.e. great authorities.

<sup>50</sup> Vol. i, p. 5a.

<sup>51</sup> Here the text seems to be corrupt.



connection between the two . . . . Moreover, I testify that there is no Holy Spirit in them: and I was told by the great scholar R. Me'ir of Biala who attended a *se'udah shelishith* in Praga<sup>52</sup> at the house of a very great *ṣaddiq*. They quoted to him (a verse)<sup>53</sup> from the [pentateuchal] portion of *Ṣaw* and he expounded it. And later he said that it (*sc.* the explanation) had been very sweet and true. So the above-mentioned scholar answered. 'If it were stated in that verse *le-qaddesho* you could have said it was true (*i.e.* the explanation of the verse). But since this word does not occur in that passage, how can it be true?<sup>54</sup>'

The author of this pamphlet, a violent opponent of Hasidism, then reports another instance of a passage misquoted by a highly respected hasidic leader and remonstrates against the theory of divine infusion of sermons:

"they want to show their piety by saying that God granted them Torah.<sup>55</sup>"

He concludes by indicating the theory—which he attacks—of the stammering of enthusiastic speakers:

"Have you no spare time to develop thoughts so that the thing may be well established . . . . I find this behaviour bad in the extreme. I can find no excuse for it. Either you think that they (*i.e.* the *ṣaddiqim*) speak with the Holy Spirit . . . This is disproved, as I have explained. It is patent that your aim is that you should be given the title of prophets."<sup>56</sup>

Here the anti-hasidic polemicist develops a lengthy argument against what he calls prophetic behaviour. Although hasidic literature meticulously avoided making use of the nomenclature *navi*' and *nevu'ah*<sup>57</sup> in describing ecstatic preaching and praying or in agitating for its cultivation, ecstatic experiences were regarded as manifestations of an overwhelming divine power which came upon the *Hasidim* mainly at the time of prayer and of sermon, and

<sup>52</sup> In Poland, near Warsaw.

<sup>53</sup> The verse was misquoted by the *Ḥasidim*, as becomes clear in the course of the story.

<sup>54</sup> *Sefer Wikkuah*, Warsaw, 1798, p. 19b-20a.

<sup>55</sup> "*she-ha-Shem yithbarakh mizdammen (= mezammen) lahem Torah*", *ibid.* p. 20a.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Probably as a kind of internal apologetic censorship, cf. the remarks in my article *A Circle of Pneumatics in pre-Hasidism*, *JJS*, viii, 1957, p. 202, note 9.

induced them to make improvised utterances. These experiences constituted a determining element in the religious life of early Hasidism. The theory that the 'World of Speech' takes control of man's utterances in ecstasy sums up adequately the thrilling sense of the real presence of this divine power, abundantly experienced in the revivalist phenomena of early Hasidism. The atmosphere surrounding the delivery of the sermon was no less revivalist than the atmosphere of its prayer-life. Both testify to the intense sensation shared by the members of the sect, and to their vivid feeling that a divine power of speech actually does take possession of man and work within him in his ecstatic experience.

## IV

The metaphors mentioned in section I are accompanied by a note of admonition 'let him consider himself as nought'. This becomes the practical programme of a specific kind of contemplation. What we are presented with here is not, for the most part, an abstract account of the nature of man, or even of the nature of the mystic, but rather practical advice on contemplative procedure. Rather than constituting a comment, in the style of mystical anthropology, on the essential nothingness of man, it is a practical guiding principle as to how to reach experimentally one's true nature, which is non-existence. The human being begins fulfilling his merely passive rôle in the moment when he recognises his own *nihilitudo*: he is empty and immobile, activated only by the power of God within him. His sole task is to understand that he is no more than a passive instrument and mentally to prostrate himself in repudiation of all selfhood. This 'ascetic' effort is not guaranteed in all the texts to lead to the promised inflow of the divine which the mystic awaits. The Maggid does not actually specify that an ecstatic state will arise as the result of the instrumental passivity of the mystic. On many occasions he omits altogether to mention this second, ecstatic, stage. But his remarkable homily on the musician is enough to prove that passiveness is not merely one of the general requirements of ascetism, but rather a preparatory phase of a precise contemplative technique aimed at the attainment of ecstasy. Contemplative exercises centred on the nature of human instrumentality are the best possible means whereby the instrumentality appreciated by the mystic in contemplation may become actualized within the ecstatic experience.

Contemplation of this kind is not focussed on the 'greatness of God' or the 'greatness of His creation'. Likewise, it can be said that the way to ecstasy described here is not the gradual ascent of the soul from 'world' to 'world', remounting the path of emanation—although the Maggid does indeed, in a different context, advocate this latter type of contemplation. But the technique for achieving ecstasy in self-annihilation is the searching penetration of the contemplative mystic turned inwards into the very depths of his own soul, in scrutiny of his own essential nature.

The mystic's contemplation here means a specialisation in his mental activity, and its simplification by narrowing down the field of consciousness and thus intensifying the activity of thinking. In other words, it means thinking more and more about less and less. The content of this intensified thinking is very limited: it is the passivity or the nullity of the human being. The way is that of self-knowledge, achieved by a mystical introspection which amounts to recognition of the instrumental character of man in a very specific respect, namely, of oneself. By thinking of oneself in a repeated contemplative way—whether in the image of the *shofar*, the hammer, or the harp—one comes to accept the nature of God as the sole agent not only in the world, but even more emphatically, within oneself. One has then reached the stage at which the objective consideration of the exclusive activity of God and the radical passivity of man becomes a subjective reality, in the form of the ecstatic experience. But in the Maggid's view the recognition by the mystic of his own nothingness in his *via passiva*, and his preparatory evacuation of selfhood, are in themselves a kind of 'ascetic' discipline of inestimable spiritual benefit, even if they are not followed by ecstasy.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> The radically quietistic attitude of R. Hayyim H. of Amdura, epitomized in the demand of "slaughtering one's own will" (בהיותם מקריבים לפניך) כשירצה לקרב א' ע להקב' ה זבח רצון עצמו Hayyim wa-Hesed, Warsaw, 1891 p 31 b) lies outside the narrow limits of the present enquiry, R. Hayyim's aim is not ecstasy but *unio per voluntatem*.





## *The Murabba'at Documents*

THE long-awaited documents from Wadi Murabba'at have now been published.<sup>1</sup> The sumptuous volume of texts, and its accompanying volume of plates, contain something for everybody. For the archaeologist, there is the detailed description of the excavations (by R. de Vaux). The biblical scholar finds, in addition to fragments from the Pentateuch and *Isaiah*, also major parts of a scroll of the Twelve Prophets. The linguist gains new insight into the Hebrew and Aramaic of the tannaitic period. The legal historian finds much that will call for his attention, material of which he had formerly been permitted a glimpse only.<sup>2</sup> Most of the material is in Hebrew and Aramaic, but some Greek documents are also of significance; fragments in Latin and Arabic appear to be of minor importance. Of more general interest is a further letter from Ben Kosba, addressed to Yeshua b. Galgula (the recipient also of the letter published by Milik in *Revue Biblique* lx (1953), pp. 276 ff. = *text* 43 of the present edition).

To deal with all these aspects is a task far beyond the present reviewer. Attention will in the main be concentrated on one particular topic, the legal documents. It will be convenient to divide our discussion into three parts: A. Details, B. Some Legal Formulas, and C. Conclusions.

Most of the papyri edited by Milik (Hebrew and Aramaic) and by Benoit (Greek) are in a pitiful state of preservation: very few of them even approach completeness. Many of the reconstructions suggested by the editors are of a hypothetical nature, a fact which they themselves repeatedly stress. Even what is preserved is often exceedingly difficult to read, and one can but admire the patience and persistence of the editors. Milik promises a detailed discussion of the various cursive scripts in a later volume. In the meantime, some of the readings should be treated with

<sup>1</sup> P. BENOIT, J. T. MILIK, and R. DE VAUX, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, II, *Les Grottes de Murabba'at*, The Clarendon Press, 1961. £ 8. 8s.

<sup>2</sup> Legal documents were published by R. DE VAUX, *Revue Biblique* lx (1953), pp. 269 ff. (= *Text* 42 of the present edition); J. STARCKY, *Revue Biblique* lxi (1954), pp. 161 ff.; J. T. MILIK, *Revue Biblique* lxi (1954), pp. 182 ff. (a second edition of this document was published in *Biblica* xxxviii (1957), pp. 264 ff.); J. T. MILIK, *Biblica* xxxviii (1957), pp. 255 ff.; P. BENOIT, *Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni*, 1957, pp. 257 ff. (= *Text* 114 of the present edition).

reserve, especially where the resultant text is objectionable on substantive legal grounds.

Three of the documents, *Texts* 42, 43, and 114, have been previously published, with comments. The policy of advance publication seems to this reviewer to be a very commendable one, and it might be put into effect on an even larger scale. The editors themselves will no doubt agree that discussion by numerous scholars has considerably furthered our comprehension of the texts. Advance publication need not cause delay, and will by no means detract from the value of the book. On the contrary, it will enjoy a degree of permanence greater than that which can result from the labours of a single person, however erudite and devoted to his task.

The book is printed with all the excellence one takes for granted of publications of the Clarendon Press. One might suggest some minor improvements only, of a technical nature: at the top of the right-hand page the number of the text discussed might conveniently be given. In the comment following the texts the Hebrew letters are too large in relation to the Latin ones; the resulting inequality of space between the lines is displeasing to the eye (see, e.g., pp. 112-3, 120-1).

#### A. DETAILS

*Text* 7 consists of insignificant fragments, in Hebrew. Its legal character is established by the phrase *w]m kn l' 'š[h*—‘and if I shall not do so’, which introduces provisions in case of the non-fulfilment of obligations. Milik refers to the Aramaic equivalent in *Text* 18, 7. See also *Ex.* xxi: 11: *we'im šeloš 'eleh lo' ya'ašeh lah . . .*; in Elephantine, Kraeling, 7, 38 f.: *whn l' y'bd kwt*.

*Text* 18, a papyrus of the year 2 of Nero (55/56 C.E.) is the fragment of a recognisance of debt. Its main interest is in the use of the verb *'ytwdy* (the Aramaic equivalent of *ὁμολογεῖν*), from which the Talmudic *'oditha*—‘admission (of indebtedness)’ is derived; until now it was known only from amoraic sources of considerably later date.<sup>3</sup> In line 7 read *wšnt šmṯh hwh*; this is a *prosbol*-clause, excluding the sabbatical release of debts. Its formulation differs from that of the Mishnah, *Shevi'ith* x, 4, and from that of later Jewish documents (see already Milik, p. 103).

<sup>3</sup> A. GULAK, *Das Urkundenwesen im Talmud*, 1935, p. 2.



*Text 19*, a double document,<sup>4</sup> is one of the better preserved papyri. This is a bill of divorce (*geṭ*), executed in 111 C.E. (?), at Mešada. See Milik's analysis of the various clauses, p. 104. We shall discuss *infra* (p. 166 f.) the declaration empowering the divorcee to marry another man. The financial clauses of the document are not well preserved. Apparently the husband has returned such parts of the dowry as were extant, and all that is destroyed or damaged he undertakes to make good *lrb'yn*. Milik renders this 'fourfold' (*au quadruple*), but there seems to be no good reason for such a penalty. More likely it means 'in quarters', i.e., in four instalments. Such an arrangement is not known in Jewish sources, but a payment in three instalments occurs in Roman law (Ulpian, 6.8).<sup>5</sup>

*Text 20* is a fragment of a marriage contract, a *kethubbah*, of 117 C.E. (?).<sup>6</sup> Milik has devoted much effort to its reconstruction, and to filling up its *lacunae*. It is unfortunate that he does not distinguish between the various funds which occur in the Jewish marriage document. He employs *dot*—'dowry' without discrimination to render (i) *mohar*, (ii) dowry, and (iii) *ksp ktwbh*—'money of the marriage contract'.<sup>7</sup> Actually, the *mohar* is always a payment (actual and immediate, or fictitious and postponed) by the bridegroom, either to the bride herself, or—earlier—to the head of her family. The dowry is the property brought by the bride into the marriage; it is itself not homogeneous, but in the present discussion we may disregard this point. Finally (*ksp*) *ktwbh* is a general term, covering all the sums due under the marriage contract, i.e., both *mohar* and dowry. There is then a movement of property in opposite directions: from the bridegroom and to him. Hence, in line 4, *yhbn' lyky mwhr btwlyky* (restored) is to be rendered: 'I have given unto thee the *mohar* (brideprice) of thy virginity.' In line 7 ... *yrtwn ksp ktwbtyk* ... (restored) is to be rendered: '... they

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of double documents, see BENOIT, p. 244 ff. of the volume; see also C. B. WELLES, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report V, Part I, The Parchments and Papyri*, 1959, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> On p. 108 MILIK refers to a bill of divorce, of 134 C.E., executed by the wife. If correct, this would be most surprising, and in full contradiction to all we know from talmudic sources. The early publication of the document seems very desirable.

<sup>6</sup> A photocopy of the document was published already in *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* lxxxiv (1952-3), plate xxxiv.

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes *ksp* is omitted and *ktwbh* only remains, i.e. '[money of the] marriage contract'.

will inherit the money of thy marriage contract . . . ' (and similarly also in line 12).<sup>8</sup> Line 3: *m[wšh*: the *waw* is superfluous. Line 6: *'m tš[*: the reconstruction *'m tšb'yn* mentioned by Milik (p. 113) is preferable to that underlying his translation: *au cas où tu di[vorcerais*. Line 9: *b'lyn* is the plural of *b'l*—'husband', synonym of *gbryn* in the traditional *kethubbah* (see also *Text* 21, 12). The restoration of lines 12-13 is unlikely to be correct: the defension clause (cf. *infra*, p. 168 f.) usual in conveyances does not suit a marriage contract.

*Text* 21 is another fragmentary marriage contract, of uncertain date. The restoration *'lyk*, line 10 (and *'ly[k*, line 13), does not seem well-founded: *'l* refers always to the person subject to a duty, not to the bearer of a right; hence *'lyk* would mean, 'you are bound', 'there is a claim against you'; cf. in Elephantine, Cowley 49, 2: *'tly 'lyk ksp whṭn . . .*—'I have against thee (a claim for) money and wheat . . .' The right-hand portion of the papyrus, starting at line 10, is separated from the central part by a break several letters wide; this is disregarded by the editor in lines 17 and 18.

*Text* 22 is a deed of sale of a field, in Hebrew, of 131 C.E. The document is in a very poor state. Line 10 f.: *'m ytyr] 'w ḥsr llwqh*—'whether excessive or short (in area), it is the buyer's', that is to say, he benefits by the eventual excess, and bears the eventual loss. (See p. 167 f., for a more detailed discussion of the phrase.)

Quite useless are the remnants of *Text* 23, another Aramaic deed of sale, of 132 C.E.

*Text* 24 is a roll of extracts of leases, also poorly preserved. There are fragments of 11 leases, very similar in formulation, which yet do not yield a complete text. The deeds are executed on the 20th Shevaṭ of year 2 of the revolt (133 C.E.); the leases were to last for five years, till the end of the eve of the sabbatical year (*'d swp 'rb šmṭh*—columns B, C, E). The date formula proper ('20 Shevaṭ, year 2 of the deliverance of Israel') is followed by the words *'l yd šm'wn bn kwsb' nsy' ysr'l*. The import of this phrase turns on the correct rendering of *'l yd*. If it is rendered 'through', the phrase becomes part of the date formula, stressing the role

<sup>8</sup> See also BENOIT, at p. 252, who rightly stresses that *mohar et dot figurent côte à côte dans le formulaire de la Ketuba*. Less convincing is his suggestion that the dowry was introduced in the hellenistic period. It exists already in Old-Babylonian texts (*šeriktum*).

of Ben Kosba as the instrument of deliverance: '... the deliverance of Israel, through Simeon ben Kosba, the prince of Israel'.<sup>9</sup> Milik renders 'l yd by *par l'autorité*—'through the authority of', 'on behalf of'. Linguistically such a rendering is quite possible.<sup>10</sup> From the point of view of substance, both interpretations are without parallel: there is no comparable date-formula in any other published document; but the statement concerning authorisation by Ben Kosba, at this particular point in the document, is not quite satisfactory.

Next follows the place of the execution of the document, *bmḥnh šywšb bhrwdys*—'in the camp situated at Herodias'. Milik sees in this phrase proof of Ben Kosba's residence at Herodias, but this is unlikely to be correct:<sup>11</sup> *šywšb* is a reference to *bmḥnh*, and cannot be related back to Ben Kosba. It appears that Milik's case is based on the supposed omission of *bmḥnh* in columns C and D. Even if it were, it would still be the fuller formula which would have to be interpreted; and in point of fact, we submit that *bmḥnh* is to be read in both columns. In C : 3 half the line is missing, and there is space enough for [*yśr'l bmḥnh*]. More intricate is D : 3, of which very little remains: the letter *šin* beneath the 'ayin (of 'l, in line 2), and the letter 'alef beneath the *yod* (*yd*, in line 2). There is room for one letter between the two, thus: . . . ]ś[.]'; adding *nūn* and *yod*, Milik restores *n]ś[y]*,<sup>12</sup> if this were so, then the following word must be *yśr'l*,<sup>13</sup> and there remains no space for *bmḥnh*. There remains, however, the difficulty that much too much space is allotted to the words *bn kwsb*'; hence we suggest using . . . ]ś[.]' for restoring *y]ś[r]'[l*, and this leaves us again with space enough for *bmḥnh*.

Likewise open to doubt is the distinction made by the editor between the rent due to the lessor, Hillel b. Garis (who is acting on behalf of Ben Kosba), and the payment of a tithe by the lessor to the treasury. This depends on the restoration *th*'—'thou wilt',

<sup>9</sup> So already G. L. HARDING, *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* lxxxiv (1952-3), p. 108.

<sup>10</sup> DR. FALK (privately) refers to the use of 'l yd in several mishnaic texts; e.g. *Sheqalim* ii: 2; *Nega'im* xiv: 12.

<sup>11</sup> See, on this point, also the remarks of Y. YADIN, *Ha'arets*, 10.3.1961.

<sup>12</sup> The ordinary spelling in this document is indeed *nśy*', which occurs 7 times: B 3, 9; C 3; D 18; E 2, 7; I 3; but since *nśy*' is attested by F 3; G 3, this is not a decisive obstacle.

<sup>13</sup> Milik indeed suggests reading remnants of *sin* and *resh*, but it is submitted that the traces of two letters visible in the plate are not identifiable.



which seems arbitrary (it might be 'h'—'I shall', just as well). *m'srt* (B. 17), (C. 15) is plural: *me'ušaroth. l'mt kkh*—'according to this' (C. 18, D. 19, also *Text* 30, 24): the Aramaic equivalent of the phrase, *lqbl dnh*, is quoted by R. Joshua b. Qorḥah (about 150 C.E.); see Palestinian Talmud *Yevamoth* 14a, *Kethubboth* 29a. The phrase appears of little import. Parallels in *Tosefta*, *Kethubboth* iv: 12, Babylonian Talmud *Bava' Meši'a* 104a are corrupt.

*Text* 25 is a fragment of a deed of sale, in Aramaic, executed in 133 C.E. Of a similar nature, but of uncertain date, is *Text* 26. In line 5, *hrr*—'contestation', may be connected with the Late Babylonian *ḥarāra*, occurring in a similar context (see *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 6, p. 91); the Accadian term is itself considered to be derived from Aramaic '*rr*'—'to contest'.<sup>14</sup>

*Texts* 27 and 28 are minor fragments in Aramaic, of uncertain date. They do not call for comment.

*Texts* 29 (of 133 C.E.) and 30 (134) are deeds of sale, in Hebrew. The former is very fragmentary, the latter is better preserved. The following clauses can be distinguished, after the introduction stating the date and the names of the parties: (i) description of the property conveyed; (ii) a statement of the price and acknowledgement of its receipt by the vendor; (iii) a definition of the rights of the buyer; (iv) a defension clause, in which the vendor promises to defend the buyer's title in case it is disputed; finally (v) a declaration by the wife of the vendor, renouncing any claim to the property sold (cf. also Milik, p. 144). We shall deal later with the defension clause, and with the waiver by the wife of her rights. With regard to the latter, we should merely wish to remark here that the reading and interpretation of part of it, in lines 26-27, is unlikely to be correct. According to the editor, the waiver is conditional on the receipt by the wife (if widowed) of an annual payment of 30 dinars, and on the continued use by her of the house of her husband. These are essentially matters to be settled between the husband and the wife, and alien to the conveyance of property by the former. The proviso suggested by the editor would deprive the waiver of its effect.

*Text* 31 consists of insignificant fragments, in Aramaic, and it, too, apparently concerns the sale of house-property.

*Text* 32, an Aramaic fragment, concerns a money transaction.

<sup>14</sup> See C. P. T. WINCKWORTH, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1925, p. 670.

On palaeographic grounds it is held by the editor that this is one of the earlier documents, possibly of the 1st century B.C.E.

*Texts* 33 to 40 are minor fragments in Aramaic and Hebrew and will hardly yield much that is of value. *Text* 41 is a list of persons.

*Text* 42 bears no date, but from its contents the editor assigns it to the years 134 or 135. The text, which is excellently preserved, was published by de Vaux in 1953 (see p. 157, note 2, above), and has drawn the comments of many scholars. It is a letter, written in Hebrew by the *parnasin* (administrators) of the village Beth-Mashiko, and addressed to Yeshua b. Galgula, one of Ben Kosba's commanders. They certify that a cow sold had belonged to the vendor by virtue of purchase. In the final part of the letter, the writers plead the approach of hostile forces as reason for their non-appearance in person before the commander.

*Text* 43 is a letter from Ben Kosba to Yeshua b. Galgula. It was published by Milik in 1953 (see p. 157, *supra*). In spite of extensive discussion, not all details are clear. Certain behaviour on the part of the recipient (and those with him) will, it is threatened, cause their being thrown into fetters.

*Text* 44, a further letter to the same recipient, is much more lenient in its tone. Like some of the letters discovered in 1960 by Yadin (not yet published) it deals with matters of supplies. We wish to suggest different interpretations on some points. The expression *štšlh tbw* (line 2) caused the editor considerable difficulty, because he regarded *tbw* as an additional verb (i.e. *tbw* 'you will come', with the 'alef omitted). Apparently *tbw* is an abbreviation of *tbw'h*—'grain'. Possibly the last letter may be a malformed final *nūn*, and then the reading would be *tbn*—'straw'. *mqwm pnyw* (line 5) is not an unknown Hebrew idiom, but a case of metathesis: the scribe wrote *pnyw* instead of *pnwy*—'empty, vacant'.<sup>15</sup> *hzw* (line 6) is uncertain, since in the present document it is difficult to distinguish between *heth* and *he* (see the editor's table of letters, p. 72). Compare, e.g. *yhw* (line 5) and *whzq* (line 7). The matter is complicated by the lack of uniformity in writing. Sometimes *he* is written in three separate strokes, e.g., *hw'* (line 7). Sometimes there is a loop at the upper left corner, when the scribe starts on

<sup>15</sup> Even though, as a rule, in the documents from the Judaean desert the distinction between *waw* and *yod* is doubtful, in this particular case the editor's reading should be adhered to.

the downward stroke; see, e.g., *glgwlh* (line 1), *lhn* (line 4).<sup>16</sup> This latter form, with the loop, is very similar to the ordinary *heth*; see, e.g., *hms̄t* (line 2), *yhp̄sw* (line 6), *’hr* (line 9). The letter in question also belongs to this group. It is therefore suggested that the letter is a *he*; palaeographically this is possible (compare, especially, *lhn*, in line 4). The interpretation resulting from this reading is much simpler. The word is *hzw*, i.e. the definite article + the feminine demonstrative pronoun *zw*. *hzh* is frequent in tannaitic Hebrew, but the feminine *hzw* also occurs, once at least, in *Tosefta*, *Shabbath* xii: 5: *ntkwyn lkbwt ’t hnr hzw wkbh ’t zw*—‘he intended to extinguish this candle, and he extinguished this (other one).’ *lbw* (line 6): the editor reads *libbo*, ‘his heart’; the preferable reading, it is submitted, is *lavoc*—‘to come, enter’. The possibility of the omission of the final *’alef* in the verb *bw* is investigated by the editor himself, in the course of his discussion of *tbw* (in line 2, see *supra*); see especially *text* 46, 7: *šybwc*—*lw*. To sum up: we have now a different, simpler interpretation of the central part of the letter, (lines 4 to 6), reading ‘Prepare for them a vacant place, at which they shall spend this Sabbath, if they shall wish to come in.’<sup>17</sup>

*Texts* 45 to 52 are larger and smaller fragments of letters. *Texts* 53 to 70 are *fragments non caractérisés*. The most interesting of these is *text* 53, consisting of several lines in a very cursive script, which the editor has been unable to tackle. Perhaps someone else will try; but this reviewer has no desire to rush in where Milik was unwilling to tread.

*Text* 72 is an *ostrakon* in Aramaic; on palaeographic grounds the editor assigns it to the first half of the first century B.C.E., Note line 10, *wslqt*—‘and I went up’. Other ostraca contain alphabets and lists of persons.

Of the documents in Greek, four are of legal interest (*Texts* 113-116). The first is apparently a small fragment of a protocol of legal proceedings; it does not yield anything substantial. *Text* 114 is a deed of loan of 171 C.E. (?). Part of the name of one contractant only is preserved ... νιου Σατορν[είνου] = ... *nii Saturnini*.

<sup>16</sup> The break between the loop and the downward stroke is probably due to the accidental disappearance of part of the downward stroke. The *he* is in this document always without such a break.

<sup>17</sup> The passage is reminiscent of *Gen.* xxiv: 31: ‘And he said, Come in (*bo*), thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared (*pinnithi*) the house, and room (*maqom*) for the camels.’



Probably the other party, too, was not a Jew. At any rate the document reveals no trace of any contact with Jewish legal practice. On the other hand, the two remaining documents, *Text* 115 (of 124 C.E.) and 116 (of uncertain date) are fragments of contracts between Jews, and their wording adheres closely to their Aramaic or Hebrew prototypes. Both are marriage contracts. The former concerns the remarriage of a divorced couple. The fragments preserved of both the documents contain mainly provisions in contemplation of the death of the spouses. The widow is entitled to continue living in her husband's house and to be maintained out of his goods *durante viduitate*; see also *texts* 20 and 21, Mishnah, *Kethubboth* iv: 12, *Tosefta*, *Kethubboth* xi: 5. The sums due to her under the marriage contract will be paid to her if she chooses to leave; the heirs may have been entitled to pay her off, and thereby compel her to leave, in accordance with Judaeen practice; see the Mishnah, *ibid.* In case the wife dies first, the sums due under the marriage contract are to pass to her sons, prior to the division of the husband's estate with his sons by other wives, if any; cf. *texts* 20 and 21; Mishnah, *ibid.*, iv, 10; *Tosefta*, *ibid.*, iv, 6. The provision in favour of male sons, *kethubbath benin dikhrin*, reflects ancient Oriental law: for similar rules, see already section 24 of the Code of Lipit-Ishtar, and section 167 of the Code of Hammurabi. Side by side with *kethubbath benin dikhrin* the marriage contracts contain provisions for the maintenance of the daughters; cf. Mishnah, *ibid.*, iv, 11. The execution clause at the end of *text* 115 differs from those encountered in the Aramaic *kethubbah* (see *text* 20, and notes thereon); it follows rather the execution formula usual, e.g., in Greco-Egyptian deeds of loan; cf. also *text* 114.

Of the Arabic material, *text* 120 only need be mentioned, a fragment of a deed of sale, of the 9th or 10th century. It contains nothing that is of special interest.

## B. SOME LEGAL FORMULAS

### (i) *Obligatio omnium bonorum* in the marriage contract

Talmudic sources<sup>18</sup> deal in detail with successive changes in the marriage contract, designed to give the wife security with regard

<sup>18</sup> Palestinian Talmud, *Kethubboth* 32b-c; Babylonian Talmud, *Kethubboth* 82 b.

to the sums due to her under the document. Finally, Simeon b. Sheṭaḥ (about 80 B.C.E.) is said to have introduced a lien upon all the property of the husband. These talmudic passages have, of course, been the subject of repeated discussion.<sup>19</sup> We find the provision now in our *text* 20. The historical origin of the lien is probably to be found in Egyptian marriage contracts, in demotic.<sup>20</sup> It is regular part of a special type of Egyptian marriage contract, the document of alimentation. A long series of these documents has been preserved; the earliest is P. Chicago 17481 (365 B.C.E.), the latest P. Michigan 347 (21 C.E.).<sup>21</sup> The demotic clause invariably pledges also property acquired by the husband subsequent to the execution of the document. The talmudic passage attributed to Simeon b. Sheṭaḥ does not refer to future acquisitions; it is, therefore, of interest that they are pledged in *text* 20.

The lien upon the husband's property did not prevent alienation, but the rights of the wife were not affected by it; that is, if she could not collect what was due to her from the chattels remaining in the hands of the husband, she could go after the property conveyed and obtain satisfaction from it. Such a situation would, of course, handicap commerce. It was therefore usual for the wife to waive her claims, as in *text* 30, and in the deed of sale of land published by Milik, *Revue Biblique* lxi (1954), pp. 182 ff. Such waivers are referred to in Mishnah *Kethubboth* x: 6, and Palestinian Talmud *Kethubboth* 32 d. Its origin, likewise, is probably to be found in demotic practice, which supplied not only the pledging clause but also the remedy for the difficulty created by it. Waivers of a similar nature occur in P. Adler dem. 2 (124 B.C.E.), and in P. Rylands dem. 17 (118 B.C.E.).

(ii) The divorcee is her own mistress.

It is the primary purpose of divorce to permit the remarriage of the parties, and especially that of the wife. Documents of divorce frequently stress the rights and liberties enjoyed by the divorcee in this respect. We find such provisions in demotic documents;

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., A. GULAK, *Das Urkundenwesen im Talmud*, 1935, pp. 53 ff; J. J. RABINOWITZ, *Jewish Law*, 1956, pp. 42 f.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. GULAK, pp. 57 f.; conceded also by RABINOWITZ, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> See E. LÜDDECKENS, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, 1960, pp. 143, 181. The clause occurs also in the ordinary demotic marriage contracts, but not regularly. Cf. LÜDDECKENS' discussion, pp. 321 ff.

at first they are quite brief and simple ('make thyself a husband' e.g., P. Berlin 3076, of 513 B.C.E.), but later they become much more involved. Clauses of this kind, in various formulations, occur also in Greco-Egyptian divorce documents. However, the formula of *text* 19, 'ty ršy' bnpšky...—'thou hast power over thyself etc.', has its closest parallel in the phrase κυριεύειν αὐτοσαυτοῦ, which is to be found not in documents of divorce, but in the Greek manumission inscriptions from Delphi.<sup>22</sup> The notion stressed in both cases is that the person concerned 'owns' himself, or herself.<sup>23</sup> This is familiar in ancient law. Since a human being, like a chattel, is capable of being owned and alienated, manumission may be regarded as the transfer of the slave to himself; he thereby becomes 'his own master'. The adoption of a formula current in manumission for the purposes of the law of divorce need cause no surprise. Tannaitic sources repeatedly stress the affinity between the two institutions. The basic situation is similar: both divorce and manumission bring about freedom from a status which had imposed severe limitations upon the person subject to it.<sup>24</sup>

### (iii) The formula *de modo agri*

The exact statement of the area of a field sold is of obvious importance and disagreement on this point was a subject of litigation from very early times. There are numerous instances in Eastern sources, and in early Roman law there is the *actio de modo agri* brought by the buyer complaining of a deficiency in the area of the property conveyed.<sup>25</sup> But frequently the documents of conveyance would contain clauses waiving claims on the part of both the seller and the buyer. Perhaps the most detailed formulation is that which occurs in documents from Nuzi (15th century B.C.E.): *šumma eqļu šašū ma'du ulinakkis u šumma miš ula uradda*—'if

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., COLLITZ, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, no. 1748. Discussing the Greek phrase, P. KOSCHAKER (*Über einige griechische Rechtsurkunden aus den östlichen Randgebieten des Hellenismus*, 1931, p. 74) refers to the phrase *ša ramāniša šī*—'she is her own', used in Old-Babylonian manumission; cf. also the manumission formula in *Mishnah Giṭṭin* ix, 3: *hry 't l'šmk*—'thou art thy own'. See also RABINOWITZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 30 f.

<sup>23</sup> KOSCHAKER, *ibid.*, *Eigentum an sich selbst*.

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion of the connection between divorce and manumission, see my *Gifts in Contemplation of Death in Jewish and Roman Law*, 1960, pp. 166ff.

<sup>25</sup> See the detailed discussion by M. SAN NICOLO, *Die Schlussklauseln der altbabylonischen Kauf- und Tauschverträge*, 1922, pp. 205 ff.



this field is (too) large, he will cut off nothing, and if it is (too) small, he will add nothing.' <sup>26,27</sup>

In our documents we have waivers of this kind in *texts* 22, 30, and in the deed of sale published in *Biblica* xxxviii (1957), pp. 258 f.: 'm ytyr 'w hsr llwqh—'whether excessive or short (in area), it is the buyer's'.<sup>28</sup> A clause of this kind is mentioned also in the tannaitic sources,<sup>29</sup> where there is a detailed discussion of its implications and effects. Now in these texts in the Mishnah and the *Tosefta* the final term 'it is the buyer's' (llwqh or lzbnh) is omitted. One might dismiss this as unimportant, and assume that the tannaitic instances limit themselves to the essential. That is quite possible, and in any case it is not suggested that there is any substantial difference between the two formulations. Still, it ought to be noted that both have parallels in external sources. The briefer formula was in widespread use in early Eastern sources, but comparable expressions occur also in Egypt. The fuller formula, as far as I can see, is to be found in Old-Babylonian sources only: *litir limti ana šamanima*.<sup>30</sup> This is exactly the same as the formula used in the Judaeen deeds. It appears, therefore, that the Judaeen formula is ultimately derived from the Old-Babylonian one, even though the channels by which it was handed down are hidden from our eyes.

#### (iv) The defension clause

The deeds of sale usually contain an undertaking on the part of the vendor to come to the defence of the buyer, in case his title is challenged.<sup>31</sup> This defension clause has a very complicated history and is to be found in many early Oriental sources, also in demotic documents of the Saitic period. In Greek, it occurs in documents

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Text Nuzi 87, P. KOSCHAKER, *Neue keilschriftliche Rechtsurkunden aus der El-Amarna-Zeit*, 1928, p. 172. See SAN NICOLO, *ibid.*, for all the sources known at the time of the publication of his book. For references to sources from Susa and Nuzi, also to Middle Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian documents, cf. the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 7, p. 222, under the phrase *equm išu u madu*—'a field small or large'.

<sup>27</sup> There was another way of formulation: the parties might refrain altogether from stating the area, substituting for it expressions like 'however large it be'; see SAN NICOLO, *op. cit.*, p. 208, note 8; see also P. Dura 26 (227 C.E.): δσθου ἐστὶν μέτρον — 'whatever its area'.

<sup>28</sup> In *Biblica*, loc. cit., in Aramaic: hn h[s]r ['w y]tyr lzbnh.

<sup>29</sup> Mishnah, *Bava Bathra* vii, 2-3; *Tosefta*, *ibid.*, vi, 25.

<sup>30</sup> SAN NICOLO, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>31</sup> See *texts* 26, 30; also *Biblica* xxxviii (1957), p. 259.

from Avroman, Dura-Europos, and in Byzantine Egypt. I have dealt with it in detail elsewhere,<sup>32</sup> and do not wish to repeat my submissions here. For the present purpose two points are noteworthy: (a) in Judaea the defension formula contains two verbs: *mrq*—'to clean', and *qym qdm*—'place before'; *mrq* is a cognate of the Accadian verb *murruqu* employed in Neo-Babylonian defension clauses; *qym qdm* (omitted in *text* 30) corresponds to *nadānu* of the documents written in Accadian. It is fairly probable that the Judaeian formula is modelled on the Neo-Babylonian one. (b) Tannaitic sources and the Palestinian Talmud, while recognising the vendor's liability in case of eviction, yet contain no reference to any duty of defension. Such a duty is mentioned once only, in the Babylonian Talmud, *Bava Meši'a*, 15a, in a quotation by Rava (about 300 C.E.) from a deed of sale.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusions are necessarily of an interim nature only. Serious work on the Judaeian material will have to await the publication of the documents to which Milik and Benoit repeatedly refer, as well as to the rich finds made by Yadin some weeks ago. At the moment one has to be content with stating, in outline, a few preliminary results, as they suggest themselves on perusal of the volume.

Our investigation of some legal formulas reveals again syncretistic tendencies at work within the Jewish legal practice of the tannaitic period. This is in itself nothing new, but additional evidence is always welcome. Of the few items considered, two (*modus agri*, defension) have their roots in the ancient East. The lien on the property of the husband, and its subsidiary provisions, are in all probability derived from national Egyptian law. The formula concerning the divorcee's power over herself has a close parallel in Greek manumission inscriptions. We have seen that developing Jewish legal practice did not operate in seclusion and isolation (as some would have us believe); quite the contrary, it borrowed freely from the legal systems accessible to the scribes and lawyers. It follows that in studying the Jewish sources, attention must be paid to those foreign systems which could have

<sup>32</sup> *Introduction to the Law of the Aramaic Papyri*, 1961, pp. 89 ff., 117 ff.; cf. also *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* cl (1958), pp. 26 f.

exercised influence upon tannaitic (and pre-tannaitic) Palestine. It follows also that the evidence of Jewish law is relevant for elucidating points that are obscure even within the extraneous systems upon which Jewish law has drawn.

No less important is the opportunity we are given by the Judaeen documents of checking on the talmudic sources. In spite of all the wealth of material, the Talmud is far from presenting a full picture of the contemporary legal practice. In particular the talmudic writings cannot be relied upon for the purpose of dating the various institutions and arrangements. The admission of debt (see p. 158, above), of which we now have evidence in Murabba'at in 56 C.E. (*text* 18), occurs in amoraic sources only. The obligation of future acquisitions is missing from the lien-formula attributed to Simeon b. Sheṭaḥ. The defension clause has gone unnoticed by any Palestinian source, and Rava's quotation could have been regarded as fully accounted for by Babylonian practice, and would not justify any conclusion back to Palestine. It follows that *dicta*, dealing *obiter* with one point or another, serve to fix a *terminus ante quem* only. It is different when the talmudic source expressly attributes an innovation to a particular scholar. As examples one may mention the re-arrangement of the marriage contract by Simeon b. Sheṭaḥ; the *prosbol*, introduced by Hillel; the oath imposed upon the defendant summarily denying a claim, introduced by R. Nahman. There is, in cases of this kind, no reason to distrust the accuracy of the talmudic statement.

Perhaps the most significant single fact emerging from the discoveries in the Judaeen desert, both published and unpublished, is the breaking of the language barrier by Jewish legal practice. It is surprising to find it operating simultaneously in three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. True, tannaitic sources discuss the validity of documents written in Greek,<sup>33</sup> but one was not inclined to attribute much weight to this fact: it could be taken to refer, in the main, to documents drawn up in the Diaspora and not specifically Jewish. The use of Greek is further evidence for the advance of hellenistic influence upon Jewish law and life in Palestine. But there is also another side to this matter: the use of Greek might have made Jewish legal practice—or, more generally speaking, Oriental legal practices—available and intelligible to all those *strata* of population in Palestine and the surrounding

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Mishnah *Gittin* ix, 9; *Tosefta*, *Bava Bathra* xi, 8.



countries which were unfamiliar with Semitic languages, without the need for further mediation. As a consequence, the possibility that some of the many innovations in legal style which can be observed in Byzantine Egypt, may reflect the impact of Jewish and Oriental legal practices,<sup>34</sup> now becomes more tangible and likely.<sup>35</sup> To end these reflections, a word of warning may not be out of place: there is no justification for wholesale assertions of influence. Each point must be proved strictly—and separately. We have been dealing with possibilities only, not with anything specific.

Finally, I should like to stress the debt of gratitude owed by legal historians to the learned editors, for a difficult job very well done. We shall willingly increase our debt even more, if they favour us with the early publication of the remaining material.

(Concluded May 1961)

Jerusalem

REUVEN YARON

<sup>34</sup> Urged already by J. J. RABINOWITZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 ff.

<sup>35</sup> It may also be noted, in passing, that *texts* 115, 116, contain two verbs which do not occur in Egyptian papyri before the 6th century. The one is ἀμφιᾶζειν (115, 9, 116, 9)—‘to provide with clothing’; it appears beside the common ἡμαρτίζειν in P. Jandanae no. 62, 14. The other verb, προβιβᾶζειν (114, 14)—‘to bring forward’, occurs in P. London 1708: 262.

P.S. With regard to the letters mentioned in the comments on *text* 44 (p. 163, above), see now Yadin's preliminary reports in *Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society* xxv (1961) 53 ff. (Hebrew), and in *Israel Exploration Journal* xi (1961) 40ff; cf. also Kutscher, *Leshonenu* xxv (1961) 117ff.



## *Melekh ha-'olam: Zealot influence in the Liturgy?*

IN the last volume of the *Journal of Jewish Studies* the Editor made the stimulating suggestion that a spirit of anti-Gnostic protest may have given rise to the familiar *melekh ha-'olam* ('King of the World') phraseology without which, according to the third century scholars R. Yoḥanan (Bab. *Berakhoth* 12a) and Rav (Jer. *ib.*, ix, 1) no Jewish formula of benediction is valid. Without wishing to oppose a proposition which, because of its very nature, can be neither proved nor disproved, I would like to put forward an alternative possibility which again by reason of its nature can remain a possibility only.

Obviously, the first-century Zealots<sup>1</sup> must have had a certain influence on Jewish life, which was not presumably wholly confined to their own body, and may well have survived it. After the Fall of Jerusalem moreover they must in most cases have been absorbed by the Pharisee majority, to whom they were superficially so close in most respects, bringing with them some at least of their characteristic ideas. Fundamental among these was the doctrine that the Jews had no sovereign other than God alone, and that the recognition of any earthly ruler (Jew as well as Gentile, presumably, if they were logical on this point) was therefore a cardinal sin. Would it not have been natural for them to introduce this conception into the most common prayer-formula, reiterated a hundred times daily, making the recital in this precise form obligatory? Thus '*Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God* . . . . . in this oft-repeated phrase (perhaps the original form) became converted, or rather amplified, into '*Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the World*'. 'Any benediction that does not comprise the Sovereignty of God is no benediction', they declared: and a century and a half later outstanding scholars both in Palestine and Babylonia preserved the tradition that had originated with

<sup>1</sup> I use this term as a convenient one to cover the overlapping groups designated by Josephus 'Zealots', '*Sicarii*' and 'the Fourth Philosophy'. I have given my reasons for assuming the approximation (I do not argue for identity) of these bodies in my article, *The Zealots in the War of 66-73*, in *JSS*, iv (1959), pp. 332 ff. In his characteristic diatribe in *JQR* (NS), li (1960), pp. 165 ff., Professor Solomon Zeitlin of Dropsie College reiterates all his long-familiar assertions on the subject but fails to pay attention to any of these arguments, which appear to me conclusive. Nevertheless, it will not seriously affect the present article or any of my other recent publications on the subject if the term '*Sicarii*' is substituted throughout for 'Zealots'.



them, though doubtlessly interpreting it (as presumably the intervening generations of pious sages had done) in a different—that is, a transcendental and non-political—sense.

This is not the only detail in the Liturgy that may hypothetically be ascribed to this same faction. Repeatedly, when Jews came together for study or for prayer, they ejaculated the doxology of the *Qaddish*: 'Magnified and hallowed be His great name in the world which He created at his will: and may He establish his Kingship in your lives and in your days and in the days of all the house of Israel—surely in origin not a merely spiritual but a political aspiration, conforming to the Zealot doctrine,<sup>2</sup> and in the political circumstances of the Roman Empire in the first century, a reasonable expression if it was taken literally.<sup>3</sup> It seems moreover conceivable, if this is admitted, that the remarkable 'Sovereignty' passages of the New Year liturgy may express the Zealot outlook, if not indeed the entire association of the New Year festival with the idea of Divine Kingship: an association which, unknown to Josephus, was firmly established little more than a century after.<sup>4</sup>

It is not unreasonable, moreover, to imagine that it was the Zealots who first audaciously insisted on interrupting the reading even of the sacrosanct Biblical verses of the *Shema* by interpolating 'Blessed be His Kingship for Ever and Ever'. This, it might be suggested, was the original form, later made more remote and thereby more innocuous by the Pharisees, or Temple authority or other elements, by the complicated and difficult amplification into: *Blessed be the Name of the Glory of His Kingship for Ever and*

<sup>2</sup> If the second clause refers to the political circumstances of the time, is it conceivable that the first, *in the world which He created at His will*, is a protest against the Greek 'philosophical' conceptions that were becoming prevalent in the country?

<sup>3</sup> That the clause was familiar in the early part of the first century, even if it did not originate then, is certain from its inclusion by Jesus—though in a transcendental sense—in the Lords' Prayer. It may be significant that the strongly political sequel in the *Qaddish*, 'and may He bring about His deliverance and hasten His Messiah' (perhaps a later addition) was preserved in the Sephardi—i.e. Babylonian—rite, in an area in which it was harmless, but omitted, possibly from motives of caution, in the Ashkenazi—i.e. Palestinian within the Roman and later Byzantine orbit, where the nationalistic implications were obvious.

<sup>4</sup> Could it be that this is to be associated with the Revolutionary triumph in the autumn of 66, at the New Year period, which may therefore have been reckoned as beginning a new era? The theme of Divine sovereignty associated with this season in the ancient Near Eastern religions might now have been revived and reinterpreted. Josephus' apparent ignorance on this point is surely most suggestive.

*Ever*'. It must be born in mind that, once the Zealots had put forward their doctrine, none of the other elements in Judaism could very well afford to reject it; although they would doubtless have reinterpreted it in a less extreme sense, as may have been the case here.

Somewhat less problematic, as it seems to me, is a curious attempted liturgical innovation which is reported from this period. According to a statement in *Bab. Ber.* 12b, it was at one time desired to include 'the chapter of Balak' in the Reading of the *Shema*'. This would seem to be an extraordinary or even puerile proposal. But (as I have attempted to show elsewhere) the Chapter of Balak (or rather of Balaam's Prophecy, as indeed is assumed by the Talmud in its further discussion) with its prognostication of the 'End of Days', the triumph of the Star that was to come from Jacob, and the defeat of the Last Enemy (here designated the *Kittim*), was regarded at this period—as indeed Josephus too implies in *Ant.* iv, 125—as the basic prophesy of the final, overwhelming victory of the People of God over their enemies, cherished in particular by the apocalyptic visionaries in Qumran. Moreover, this passage led up directly to the description of the drastic action of Phineas the Zealous, the prototype and inspiration of the Zealots, even (according to legend) down to the method in which he carried his weapon in his bosom in the manner of the *sicarii* when he went to strike down the traitor and his Gentile paramour.<sup>5</sup>

We can readily understand then why 'the Chapter of Balak' (that is, its concluding part), with its message of deliverance and its ostensible instigation of direct action in order to secure this object, should have been considered by nationalistic elements a proper text for inclusion among the obligatory daily readings from Scripture: one can understand, too, that more sober and moderate authorities should have been opposed to the innovation.

All this, of course, is and must remain hypothetical. It is enough for me, for the moment, to propose that the Zealots may well have influenced the Jewish religious institutions of their time; and that the sphere and extent of this influence could profitably engage the attention of scholars better qualified than myself.

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CECIL ROTH

<sup>5</sup> The Midrash (*M.R.* to Numbers xxv: 7) insists significantly on this point, in direct contradiction to the biblical statement that the avenger carried his spear openly and ostentatiously. This appears to me a valid argument in support of the close connexion between the Zealots, modelled on Phineas, and the *sicarii* who acted in this fashion.



## *The Formula melekh ha-'olam*

THE attractive thesis put forward by J. G. Weiss in his note *On the formula melekh ha-'olam as anti-Gnostic protest* (JJS x, pp. 169 f.) is as incapable of being refuted as it is of being proved. The sources quoted by the author can not be said to substantiate his contention as he himself, indeed, points out repeatedly, but are merely shown to be not incompatible with it. However, when all relevant material is considered, the evidence seems to point in different directions.

Since all depends on the -unknown- date, at which the formula *melekh ha-'olam* was introduced, one can not rule out the suggestion that it is indeed a protest, not against Jewish heretics, but against Roman Emperor-worship,<sup>1</sup> as are the *malkhiyyoth* in the 'amidah of *rosh ha-shanah*. The latter, as Finkelstein has shown,<sup>2</sup> cannot have been introduced long before the days of R. 'Aqiva, when the Rabbis were still endeavouring to fix their place in the 'amidah, the accepted structure of which at the time did not allow for them.<sup>3</sup> Nor do the *malkhiyyoth* appear in the Fast-day liturgy, which goes back to Temple times,<sup>4</sup> where they might equally have been expected to be found before the *zikhronoth* and *shofaroth*. As regards *melekh ha-'olam*, it is surely not irrelevant to note that it does not occur in the 'amidah, which underwent its final "editing" in Yavneh shortly after the destruction of the Temple<sup>5</sup>; hence it appears likely that this formula was not introduced before the early second century C.E., which is precisely the period when the *malkhiyyoth*, too, appear to have come into being.

The opening formula of the *berakhah*, 'ברוך אתה ה' without *malkhuth*, on the other hand, was in vogue considerably earlier. Here the Dead Sea Scrolls are instructive: though there this formula is by no means yet used to the exclusion of all others, it does occur frequently.<sup>6</sup> Especially noteworthy is the one passage

<sup>1</sup> cf. A. BAUMSTARK, *Comparative Liturgy*, London, 1958 p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> L. FINKELSTEIN, *The Development of the Amidah*, JQR (NS) xvi (1925-6), p. 17 f.

<sup>3</sup> Mishnah, *Rosh ha-shanah* iv, 5. The first part of the 'alenu-prayer may be of an earlier date; cf. my article *Prayers of Beth Midrash Origin*, JSS v (1960), p. 277 f.

<sup>4</sup> Mishnah, *Ta'anith* ii, 3 and 5; cf. FINKELSTEIN, *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Cf., e.g. ELBOGEN, *Der jüd. Gottesdienst*<sup>2</sup>, p. 28 f.

<sup>6</sup> JQH DST x: 14; xi: 27; xi: 33; xvi: 8.



in the *Hodayoth*,<sup>7</sup> where a (later?) scribe has replaced the usual (אדוני) אדכּה by ברוך אתה (אדוני). As we can hardly assume pharisaic Judaism to have taken over this formula from sectarian usage, we must conclude that it was so commonly used well before the first century C.E. as to have penetrated even into sectarian prayers.

Concerning this formula we are told explicitly by a tannaitic source,<sup>8</sup> that the Rabbis insisted on the use of the Tetragrammaton (pronounced, of course, as אדני) both in the opening and the closing formula of the *berakhah* as opposed to the use of אל or אלהים. Especially objectionable was the use of the former in the opening, followed by the latter in the closing formula; this is called דרך אחרת - 'a heretical fashion'. Here an anti-Gnostic tendency may, indeed, be assumed<sup>9</sup>.

R. Jose's dictum: כל המשנה ממטבע שטבעו חכמים בברכות לא יצא is opposed to alternative benedictions quoted, and sanctioned, by R. Me'ir, viz., - ברוך שברא פת זו כמה היא נאה etc. The wording of these cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered of a heretical or sectarian nature. Hence R. Jose opposes it for one reason only: that it is a deviation, however harmless in itself, from the prescribed standard formula. The point at issue does not appear to be the substitution of פת זו שברא for פת מן הארץ, but rather the omission of some elements of the standard opening (מלך העולם ברוך אתה ה') (and, possibly, of the additional phrase שברא פת זו). Hence R. Jose's criticism is certainly not directed against the omission of the *malkhuth* formula in particular, as the formula under discussion lacks even the Divine Names.<sup>10</sup> The various prayers and blessings were not, of course, created in the first place by decree of the Rabbis and as a result of their deliberations

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* v: 20.

<sup>8</sup> j. *Berakhoth* ix, 12 d; the text in *Tosefta*, *Berakhoth* ix 20 is partly corrupt in some MSS, but cf. LIEBERMAN, *Tosefta*, *ad loc.*

<sup>9</sup> A different reading (cf. LIEBERMAN, *ibid.* p. 39, line 98) considers heretical the mention of אל at both the opening and the conclusion; cf. *Tosefta Ki-feshutah*, i, p. 122; also FINKELSTEIN, *loc. cit.* p. 6 f.

In the DSS אל is used not infrequently after ברוך אתה e.g. 1QH CST xi, 29: ברוך אתה אל הרחמים; *ibid.* fragment iv: 15: ברוך אתה אל הדעות; 1QS (DSD) xi: 15: ברוך אתה אלי; and cf. *Tosefta Ki-feshutah*, *ibid.*, where LIEBERMAN suggests that the avoidance of 'adonai in favour of 'el, may be due to exaggerated piety in the "hasidic" sects.

<sup>10</sup> LIEBERMAN (*op. cit.*, p. 59 f.) shows conclusively that, according to the Palestinian sources at least, R. Me'ir considers this form of *berakhah* valid, even though the Divine Name is not mentioned.

in the academies, but evolved gradually and spontaneously in the synagogues and the homes of the people; hence many different formulas came into existence. These are no mere “individual eccentricities”, but different customs and traditions, which were all equally legitimate until the Rabbis singled out one of them as the standard form. The controversy between R. Jose and R. Me’ir reflects a stage when the formula *ברוך אתה ה'* had already become the recognised norm, but others were still used beside it by sections of the people. R. Me’ir takes the view that, though the standard form is preferable, other formulas, too, are nevertheless valid as *berakhoth*.

In the rulings of the 3rd century Rabbis, of which the insistence on a mention of the *malkhuth* is but one example, we recognise still more clearly a determined attempt to establish once and for all a standard form of the *berakhah*, to be used to the exclusion of all others. In addition to R. Yoḥanan’s (or Rav’s) insistence on a *malkhuth* formula, we have Rav’s ruling on the mention of the Divine Name and the controversy between Rav and Samuel whether the word *אתה* is obligatory.<sup>11</sup> During the same period exception is taken to the introduction of additional Divine attributes into the first *berakhah* of the ‘*amidah*,<sup>12</sup> a practice which may have originated in heterodox, though hardly in Gnostic circles; in this context, too, the phrase *אין לך רשות להוסיף על ברכות* appears. Again, it is in the names of Rav or of R. Yoḥanan and Resh Laqish that the “unnecessary”, *i.e.*, unauthorized use of the *berakhah* formula is prohibited.<sup>13</sup> Surely all these sources taken together indicate strongly that the prime concern of the Rabbis of the 3rd century was to establish finally the use of a single and distinct standard formula, to be used exclusively for obligatory liturgical *berakhoth*, as against alternative wordings which still survived among the people.

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<sup>11</sup> b. *Berakhoth* 40a; j. *Berakhot*, ix 12 d. *Midrash Tehillim* xvi.

<sup>12</sup> j. *Berakhoth*, *ibid.* (cf. also *Midrash Tehillim*, xix); b. *Megillah* 25a; b. *Berakhoth* 33 b. Here, too, the names of the Rabbis are interchanged in the various sources, but all those mentioned belong to the 3rd century.

<sup>13</sup> b. *Berakhoth* 33 a.



## *An Armenian imitator of Judah Halevi?*

MORE than one reader of E. Werner's book *The Sacred Bridge* (the subject of which is indicated by its sub-title, 'The Interdependence of Liturgy and Music in Synagogue and Church during the First Millenium', London-New York, 1959) will, like the present writer, have raised his eyebrows when coming across the following passage on p. xix of the introduction:

"An ancient Armenian hymn type bears the superscription *Khosrovayin*, as a designation of a certain mode. Nerses Shnorhali, an Armenian Church Father of the twelfth century, links this mode and its name with the celebrated Rabbi Jehuda Halevi. It is obvious that the Armenian term is derived from Halevi's work *Kuzari*. In this case, we have at least a historical foundation upon which to start further detailed examination of the respective modes or form types."

If a type of Armenian hymn is called after the *Kuzari*, it is indeed extraordinary: but is it in fact true? Intrigued, one turns to the index, and is led to p. 233 where the matter is explained in greater detail.

"One singularly late case of attested Jewish-Armenian inter-relation should not remain unobserved. An Armenian scholar of the nineteenth century, P. Ingigian, maintains that Nerses Shnorhali borrowed an Arabic-Hebrew metre for his hymns, following the ideas and patterns suggested by Yehuda Halevi (1055?-1142?), the greatest post-biblical poet of Judaism, who had advanced them in his book *Kuzari*.

Ingigian bases his thesis upon the Armenian medieval chronicler Kiriakos Kantzagedzi (thirteenth century), whom he quotes after a manuscript in San Lazzaro:<sup>1</sup>

In our churches many hymns are (were?) sung in a manner called *Khozrovayin* (—of the Chazars—*Kuzari*), which Nerses had composed in the style suggested by the celebrated Rabbi Yehuda Halevi's poetry. These hymns are entirely different than the other hymns of our Armenian tradition . . .

Padre Leonzio Dayan of the Armenian Mechitarist monastery

<sup>1</sup> It becomes clear that even if WERNER's statements are to be taken at their face value, he is inaccurate in saying that "Nerses Shnorhali . . . links this mode and its name with the celebrated Rabbi Jehuda Halevi", since it is *Kiriakos* Kantzagedzi (Kirakos of Gandzak) who is alleged to have connected the modes invented by Nerses with Judah Halevi.



of S. Lazzaro, Venice, to whom I am indebted for this information, was also kind enough to demonstrate a few of these *Khodzrovayin* hymns for my benefit. Indeed, it was easy to see that in these hymns of Nerses the metre is closely observed and patterned after Halevi's *Hymns of Zion*. This adaptation has resulted in a metrical poetry most agreeable and flowing, which is not otherwise to be found in Armenian hymnody.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence can be divided into two heads: the (alleged) testimony of the thirteenth century chronicler Kirakos of Gandzak<sup>3</sup>, and the impression received by the author himself from a "demonstration" of a few hymns of Nerses. (We may explain here that Nerses Shnorhali, i.e., Nerses the Graceful, 1102-73, was one of the most eminent Armenian ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup>) I say the alleged testimony, since it needs no great critical acumen to realize how suspicious the quotation from Kirakos sounds and then, after exercising a little textual analysis, to conclude that, surely, Kirakos wrote that sentence only which states that many hymns in the Armenian churches are sung in a manner called *khodzrovayin*, whereas the rest is the explanation of the term *khodzrovayin*, not by the medieval chronicler, but by the nineteenth century antiquary. In contrast to the critical analyses of ancient texts, where we seldom have the occasion to verify our conclusions, our critical attempt is capable of an empiric test. I proceeded to this forthwith, enlisting the help of Dr. C. J. F. Dowsett, who kindly looked up the Armenian texts and confirmed that my suspicions were well-founded. All Kirakos of Gandzak wrote in his *Concise History* was *na bazum inč' kargeac' yekelecis k'ałcr ełanakaw, xosrovayin očov šarakans, meledis, tał ew otanawors*, "he introduced into the churches many hymns, canticles, verses and poems in a sweet mode in the *khosrovayin* style" (*Kirakos vardapeti Ganjakec'woy Hamarōt Patmut'iwn*, ed. Venice, 1865, pp. 67-8). It is this passage, quoted within inverted commas up to *šarakans*, which is drawn upon by Ł. Inčičean (*Hnaxōsut'iwn ašxarhagrakan Haya-staneayc' ašxarhi*, Venice, 1835, iii, 145-6); the rest does not belong to Kirakos at all, but to Inčičean, and it is the latter who is responsible for the posterous theory that the style employed by Nerses

<sup>2</sup> In a footnote the author gives the reference: P. INGIGIAN, *Archeology of Armenia* (1835), iii, 42-6 (in Armenian).

<sup>3</sup> See on him e.g. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, s.v. *Arménie, Littérature*, i, col. 1941.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, s.v. *Nersés IV*.

was suggested by the poetry of Judah Halevi. As the idea is obviously quite fantastic, we need not pause to ask such questions as why a style derived from Judah Halevi's poetry should be called after his philosophical work, the *Book of the Khazar King* (or *Kuzari*). As for the true explanation of the term *khosravayin* (which is, as Dr. Dowsett informs me, a native Armenian formation meaning *pertaining to Khosrov*), I have little doubt that here it is the equivalent of the Persian word *khusrawānī*.<sup>5</sup> This word is in its turn derived from the name Khusraw, Chosroes—a name borne by two of the most famous Sassanid kings of Persia—and means in general “princely”; it has also, however, the particular meaning “musical modes invented in the Sasanian period”<sup>6</sup>, and it is also current in medieval Persian. As I am not concerned with Armenian poetry, I do not propose to follow up this clue and inquire in which sense Kirakos used the term, or if Nerses was in fact influenced by Persian music (and prosody), and if so, in what way.

But, the question will be asked, did not the author convince himself by direct experience that the hymns of Nerses were closely patterned after Judah Halevi's *Hymns of Zion*, and does not he even add that when Nerses's hymns were demonstrated to him, “it was easy to see” that they were so patterned? No doubt—but we must regretfully conclude that he was the victim of illusion.

Oxford

S. M. STERN

<sup>5</sup> Dr. DOWSETT gives me some material regarding this word. It is used by the nephew and successor of Nerses Shnorhali as an adjective denoting the Armenian era, which was established in the days of Khusraw, according to *Nor bargirk<sup>c</sup> havkazean lezui*, ed. G. AWETIK<sup>c</sup>EAN, X. SIWRMÉLEAN and M. AWGEREAN, Venice, 1836-7, i, 969. In the same work the passage of Kirakos is quoted and various guesses are offered as to its derivation from some Khusraw, none of which is convincing (I notice in addition that F. NEVE, *L'Arménie chrétienne*, Louvain, 1886, p. 29, derives the word from the name of the theologian Xosrov the Great, of the tenth century); but the last alternative proposed reads as follows: “or perhaps the same as Persian *xusrevani*, i.e. ‘royal’ and ‘noble’; it is also the name of a musical mode”—which coincides with my own interpretation.

<sup>6</sup> See A. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, Copenhagen, 1944, p. 485 and the references there quoted.



*A note regarding Leopold and Adelheid Zunz:  
An Account in Letters*

IN his recent review<sup>1</sup> on my edition of the Zunz-Ehrenberg correspondence, Prof. Hans Liebeschütz stated that I "was able to print parts of these letters [lost in the original] either from copies, which have survived, or from publications by and Geiger Elbogen."

The term "copies" may create a misunderstanding. As stated in the Preface to the volume (p. viii), my edition is based on original letters by Zunz and not on copies. The same Preface includes a word of thanks to a scholar "for his aid in deciphering some intricate words in Zunz's handwriting"; p. 276 of the text offers a facsimile of a Zunz letter. As distinct from the original letters I used "copies made at one time from the original and deposited in the [Zunz] Archives and from quotations, principally by Ludwig Geiger . . . and Ismar Elbogen," as the Preface states.

Out of a total of 158 letters by Zunz included in the volume, the copies from the original concern three letters (Nos. 100, 108, 114), and the quotations from *Liberales Judentum* IX (1917), *Monatsschrift* LXVI (1922), and 50. *Bericht der Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (1936), concern fourteen letters (Nos. 5, 7, 22, 30, 34, 38, 40, 61, 64, 67, 141, 142, 178, 184). The bulk, consisting of 140 original Zunz letters are deposited in the Franz Rosenzweig Archives in Boston; one letter, printed from the original (see Preface p. IX) is in the possession of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

Waltham, Mass.

N. N. GLATZER

<sup>1</sup> *JJS*, vol. ix (1958), pp. 220-222.





M. H. GOSHEN-GOTTSTEIN, *Text and Language in Bible and Qumran*.  
Orient Publishing House, Jerusalem-Tel-Aviv 1960. pp. xv + 208.

In this volume the author brings together in reproduced form eleven articles which have appeared, in the main since 1957, in various learned publications, or are about to appear in article form. Seven of the articles are written in English, the rest in German, material which has appeared in Hebrew being reserved for republication elsewhere. In republishing these articles in a single volume, the author's hope is that the reader may be enabled to judge his views as an organic whole.

Six of the articles are concerned with the Dead Sea scrolls, and we may begin by briefly indicating some of the main points that are made in them. If a Hebrew manuscript is to be properly evaluated, the author holds, certain types of alteration in the text which are always liable to occur must be allowed for. The examination of the material assembled by Kennicott and de Rossi, together with manuscripts known since their day, is important, and each manuscript must be studied as a whole before individual readings can be utilised. Probably 95-99% of all manuscripts used hitherto for textual criticism are without importance. A dozen manuscripts on which work should especially be done are listed. The *Genizah* material must also be taken into account. Many examples of readings of the *Isaiah* scroll as compared with readings of other Hebrew manuscripts are given. The author considers too the many readings of the *Isaiah* scroll to which parallels occur in the different witnesses to the text tradition, in the LXX, Peshitta and Targum. The different versions must be seen, not as succeeding one another chronologically, but as parallel versions. That is to say, variants in the whole text tradition from the LXX to the M.T. must not be assessed according to the age of the particular version, but according to their inner probability. What is called for is a comparison of the *Isaiah* scroll with the whole known text tradition, and a beginning is made here with a comparison of it with the Peshitta and Targum. When a particular variant is to be found also in Hebrew or Greek MSS, it is noted. Two kinds of variants are distinguished—those which affect the sense, and those which are purely grammatical-syntactical.

Three articles deal with the importance of the scrolls for the study of Hebrew. Instances of the representation of an *e*-sound at the end of a word by *yod* instead of *he* illustrate how the scrolls present in a clearer light facts which are found also in the M.T. Again, the imperfect forms of the verb which occur in the scrolls enlarge our knowledge of Hebrew morphology. In the discussion on this point there is some overlap with some critical remarks made later on in the volume about R. Meyer's explanation of the form *yeqo'lehu*, which the author finds improbable.

In the article on linguistic structure and tradition in Qumran, *Isaiah A* again receives attention. While it has commonly been regarded as quasi-official representative of the scrolls "tradition", a view based upon an atomistic comparison of selected features in it, it is in fact atypical of the scrolls' "tradition". A classification of the available

material is made under three heads-phonological (including orthographic), morphological and syntactical features, and an examination of it reveals the difference between the picture which emerges from the scrolls material as a whole on the one hand, and that which emerges from *Isaiah A* on the other. *Isaiah A* in fact stands alone, and the other major documents, though the picture they present is not a unified one, constitute one group, as contrasted with *Isaiah A*.

On the question of the extent to which knowledge of the Hebrew language may help towards fixing the date of the composition of the scrolls, not much can be gained from Aramaisms and Mishnaisms, nor from the evidence of orthography. The most that can be said is that a date between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. is not excluded by the linguistic evidence. The contribution of the scrolls to our knowledge of Hebrew is not so great as has sometimes been thought, and the belief of certain scholars that the tradition of the scrolls stands especially near to Samaritan tradition must be received with caution. The author suggests that the real contribution of the scrolls to basic questions of Hebrew lies in the greater awareness we may now have of a common currency of phenomena which has hitherto, by reason of our ignorance, been labelled 'dialectical'.

The *Genesis Apocryphon* is briefly touched on. It is, so the author suggests, the only relic, apart from the *Song of Songs*, of a Jewish *wasf*-tradition, though mention is made of the Talmudic custom of celebrating 'the beautiful and graceful bride'.

The author's new edition of Mandelkern's Concordance, published in 1959, led him to examine certain types of mistake in the work, including those which arose with Mandelkern himself. From such mistakes, he argues, the student of the biblical text may learn much. The higher evaluation of the M.T., and the recognition that the LXX, which is targumic in character, is only one—and not necessarily the best—out of many text traditions, will make necessary a reorientation of textual study. None of our primary sources is *eo ipso* 'better' or 'more original' than another. Isolated identical readings in different *strata* of the text tradition prove nothing. Each stage of the text tradition deserves a separate critical apparatus.

In the article on the history of the biblical text and comparative Semitics, some of these points are taken up again. A reconstruction of an *Ur-LXX* is further away than ever, and Peshiṭta traditions, and very likely Targum traditions too, do not carry us back beyond a certain stage. The Biblical archetype cannot be reconstructed. The Dead Sea scrolls show that the M.T. basically existed by the end of the pre-Christian era, and that there was in those days a much greater wealth than has hitherto been suspected of alternative conflicting traditions "which often cannot be reduced philologically to a common denominator" (p. 161). The task of scholarship is to "reach back to that point at which alternative hyparchetypal traditions put forth equally good claims" (p. 162). Beyond that point all is subjective.

The article on afterthought and the syntax of relative clauses in Biblical Hebrew has been included, the author tells us in his intro-



duction, after some hesitation, for "sentimental" reasons, as it marks the partial transfer of his interest to the field of *Philologia Sacra*. Grammarian, commentator and textual critic will find it interesting.

The long articles on the *Aleppo Codex* and on a critical edition of the Peshitta are probably the most important in the volume. The claim of the Jewish community in Aleppo to possess the very codex which had served Maimonides as a basis for setting out the exact rules for writing scrolls of the Law has long been known. After the synagogue at Aleppo was pillaged shortly after 1947, the manuscript was supposedly lost. But a manuscript which is alleged to be the *Aleppo Codex* has come to light, and the author of this volume has had the opportunity of studying it (four photographs of the text—of *Gen.* xxvi: 37-xxvii: 30 and of *Deut.* xxxi: 28-xxxii: 50—are supplied). The three questions to which he especially directs his attention are—Is the manuscript in fact the *Aleppo Codex*? Is the *Codex* really a Ben Asher manuscript? Is it the manuscript on which Maimonides based his rules? All three questions are answered in the affirmative. The *Codex* was, it is held, actually vocalised, accented and embellished with the *Massorah* by R. Aaron b. Asher himself, and is superior to the only other known Ben Asher manuscript of the whole Bible, viz., the *Leningrad Codex*. If the author's findings are correct, the consequences will be far reaching. Indeed, his view that the *Codex* should form the basic text of any future critical editions of Aaron b. Asher's text has already been endorsed, it seems, by scholars at the Hebrew University. For, according to a recent report in *The Times* (17 November 1960), work was begun in Jerusalem in 1958 on a large scale edition of the Hebrew Bible based on the *Codex*. The work is expected to take several decades to complete, though the book of *Isaiah*, we are informed, is due to be published by 1965.

An *editio maior* of the Peshitta is, the author thinks, impossible of achievement, and is unnecessary since an *editio minor* would meet critical needs. It must be based upon manuscripts written before the tenth century, when the Syriac Biblical *Massorah* was finally fixed. An examination of later manuscripts would not justify the enormous effort involved, for they would add very little. A notable exception is the Buchanan Bible in the University Library, Cambridge. The text of the Peshitta represents probably *one* translation only, which was, however, corrected from time to time. The early manuscripts show a certain degree of fluctuation, and do not always agree with the *Codex Ambrosianus*, which cannot accordingly be simply equated with the early text of the Peshitta. In an *editio minor* biblical quotations in the works of the Syrian Fathers and commentators can, the author thinks, be dispensed with without substantial loss, though the *Commentary* of Bar-Hebraeus may have to be used. One standard MS, as far as possible, should be reproduced in the edition, and the most convenient text is the *Ambrosianus*. A double apparatus is recommended—a general one, which would contain all the material, and a second, which would contain the readings preferred by the editor. The minimum choice of manuscripts for use is indicated—on a average not more than ten manuscripts for each book



of the Old Testament need be used. The author's verdict on the Mosul edition is a more favourable one than it has sometimes received.

The necessity of a critical edition of the Peshitta is based not only on its usefulness for textual criticism, but also for linguistic purposes. Examples of syntactical, orthographic and lexicographical variants are given, and the possibility of what the author calls a concordantial dictionary of the Peshitta is raised. Such a dictionary would, it is thought, preferably be based on the proposed *editio minor*, though it could alternatively be based on the printed editions and two manuscripts, on the *Codex Ambrosianus*, together with one of the more deviating manuscripts, e.g. the *Codex Florentinus*.

These, then, are some of the author's leading ideas as he approaches the problems before him on a fourfold basis—the study of the Dead Sea scrolls, Bible texts and mediaeval Hebrew manuscripts, Peshitta philology, and comparison with the methodology of Semitic linguistics. The assembling of separate articles, sometimes on closely related themes, has inevitably led to some repetition and overlap, and the author is aware that, if he were writing afresh, he would on occasion use different language. A welcome indication of a change of terminology is his later preference for *Textwissenschaft* and *Textgeschichte* instead of the unsatisfactory term 'biblical philology' (p. viii, n. 6). The author's English style and phraseology do not always make for easy reading, but the patient reader will be well rewarded. The author has worked long at the important problems he discusses, and, as will have been observed, he makes many valuable points, some at least of which should evoke ready agreement. If it may occasionally be felt that he is given to over generalisation and to statements a little too confidently made, there is at the same time a noticeable and welcome sobriety when he writes on some matters connected with the Dead Sea scrolls. His articles, which are fully documented, deserve the close attention of all who are seriously concerned with the study of the M.T., the scrolls, and the Hebrew language.

D. WINTON THOMAS

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The following Research Papers were read in the Second Term 1960/61 on Wednesday at 5.15 p.m., in the Mocatta Library, University College, Gower Street, W.C.1.

- 1st February: S. WERSES (Jerusalem): מבנה הסיפורים שבספר- חסידים
- 8th February: PROFESSOR E. ULLENDORF (Manchester): The original version of the Book of Enoch.
- 15th February: S. SAFRAI (Jerusalem): האם היתה עזרת-נשים בבית-הכנסת בתקופת המשנה והתלמוד?
- 22nd February: Professor B. LEWIS (London): Maimonides and Lionheart.
- 1st March: J. MAITLIS (London): The Yiddish *exempla* of Samuel and Judah he-Hasid.
- 8th March: H. ROSENAU (Manchester): The Origins of Biblical Iconography.

A Seminar by Dr. S. SAFRAI of the Hebrew University on *Some Historical Aspects in Halakhic Literature* was given in the Second Term on Wednesdays at 4.15 p.m. prior to the regular meetings of the Institute. The Seminar was conducted by Dr. Safrai in Hebrew.

A Seminar by Professor G. G. SCHOLEM of the Hebrew University on *The Idra Zutta*, (*Zohar* vol. iii p. 287 ff.) was given in the Third Term in the Mocatta Library on Wednesdays at 5.15 p.m.

The Annual Lawrence Kostoris Lecture on *Buber's Interpretation of Hasidism* was delivered by Professor G. G. SCHOLEM in the Gustave Tuck Theatre, University College, W.C.1., on Wednesday, 14th June 1961 at 5.30. p.m.

Dr. J. G. Weiss

## SOCIETY FOR JEWISH STUDY

Among recent public lectures given under the auspices of Society have been the following:

PROFESSOR EDWARD ULLENDORFF:

"Jewish Influence in Abyssinia."

DR. LEON ROTH:

"Ups and Downs in Jewish Ethics."

(Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture)

RABBI DR. SOLOMON GOLDMAN:

"The Raison d'Etre of Maimonides' Thirteen Principles"

THE REV. E. S. ABINUN:

"Sephardi Romanzas."

PROFESSOR JACOB WEINGREEN:

"From Bible to Mishna."

DR. NORBERT ELIAS:

"The Structure of Jewish Society in Germany."

The programme of the Manchester Branch is obtainable from its Acting Hon. Secretary, Miss L. Philip, 2 Lady Barn Crescent, Manchester, 14.

February, 1962

HUGH HARRIS, Chairman